



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

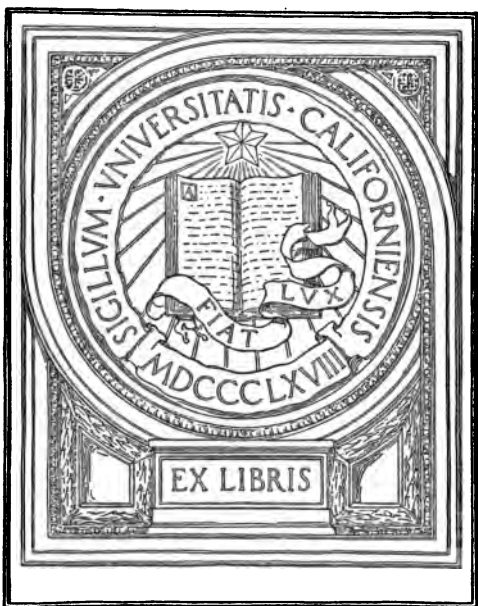
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





EX LIBRIS



CHC 548
 $\frac{C}{2}$





THE JEW.

Books for Presents.

I.

THE ROMANCE OF HISTORY,

Presenting

ITALY'S ROMANTIC ANNALS.

By CHARLES MACFARLANE, Esq., Author of "Constantinople in 1829."

3 vols.

II.

ENGLAND'S ROMANTIC ANNALS.

By HENRY NEELE. 4th Edition. 3 vols.

III.

SPAIN'S ROMANTIC ANNALS.

By M. TRUEBA. 3 vols.

IV.

ROMANTIC ANNALS OF FRANCE.

By LEITCH RITCHIE. 3 vols.

V.

THE POETICAL SKETCH-BOOK.

By T. K. HERVEY. Beautifully embellished by Barrett and Finden.

VI.

CONVERSATIONS ON INTELLECTUAL PHILOSOPHY.

3rd Edit. 2 vols.

Spindler, Karl
"11

H. P. Seal

THE JEW.

Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions,
senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the
same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means,
warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is?

SHYLOCK.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

EDWARD BULL, HOLLES STREET.

1832.

865
S757
jul
v.2

TO MRU

WHITING, BRAYFORD HOUSE, STRAND.

THE JEW.

CHAPTER I.

MARGARET'S eyes were fixed upon the gold chain which her husband had given her, as a birth-day present; but although he had presented it to her with the most affectionate assurance of undecaying fondness, she still felt that in her own breast there was no reciprocation. She respected the old man, indeed, but could not love him. She looked upon the elegant trinket rather as a fetter, which she should wish to put aside, than as an ornament which she should be proud to display. In fact, she could not deceive her own heart, which was as insensible towards the elder as the precious metal before her.

She snapped down the lid of the casket with

VOL. II.

B

M124988

TO THE ABOVE

some force, and was about to lock it up in her closet, when she observed, to her astonishment, that she was not alone. The bailiff, who, although more than fifty years of age, was still handsome, had slipped unperceived into the room. Margaret felt somewhat confused at his presence. The bailiff, who was a man of the world, soon put an end to her embarrassment, by inquiring after her husband's health: she informed him that the elder was in the garden, where he might make his inquiries. The bailiff said, with a smile, "My friend Diether appears to have a great predilection for flowers, but is so jealous of his treasure, that he appropriates the whole enjoyment of it to himself."

Margaret, who could not mistake the allusion, answered simply by a blush; when the bailiff proceeded: "The company at Limpurg, worthy madam, has lost its chief attraction since you have ceased to appear within its brilliant circle. I shall really find it necessary to avail myself of my privilege, as master of the ceremonies, to remind our negligent member, Diether, of his injustice in keeping you from appearing among us."

Margaret replied, that she preferred the quietude of her own house to the festivities at Limpurg, particularly since the return of her little son.

The bailiff shook his head significantly.—“Is it possible,” said he, “that affection for the child of a *beloved* husband can allow place to no other passion? This surpasses a batchelor’s comprehension. You are, I suspect, prevented from entering into the innocent gaieties of life. Where there is jealousy there is always constraint, and Diether is excessively jealous, in spite of all your endeavours to excuse him. But perhaps were I in his place, I should suffer from the same passion. Be that as it may,” added he, “I should be the happiest man on earth, if you would allow me to offer you that homage which you scorn to receive from the world, and accept this golden rose. Allow me to present it to you on your birth-day. Were I a prince, it should be composed of jewels.”

He handed to Margaret the golden flower, which she politely but immediately refused.

“It is a cruel refusal,” replied the bailiff, with an air of offended vanity. “Consider, madam, it is not the rose alone which you reject.”

"Sir," replied Margaret, excited by the menacing air with which he appeared to utter the last words, "consider that I am a married woman; such language can therefore neither be becoming in you to speak, nor in me to hear."

Little Hāns now entered the room, and rushed into Margaret's arms.

The bailiff was displeased at this unseasonable interruption, but, nevertheless, patting the child's blooming cheeks, in order to gratify the elder's wife, asked him, "if he loved his mother?"

"I love her more than all," said the little fellow, whilst his eyes sparkled with joy. "You ought to do so," said the bailiff, stealing a glance at Margaret, "and do you love your father equally well?"

"I have no father!" exclaimed little Hans, recurring to old recollections.

"Peace, child," said his supposed mother angrily, "give this answer again, and I will——"

"Never mind," said the bailiff, good-humouredly, and putting the boy's hands together, desired him to repeat after him,—'I pray, my dear mother, not to be angry with the bailiff, and to forgive him on my account.'"

Margaret offered the bailiff her hand, which

he tenderly pressed ; " and now," said she, " if you would deserve my forgiveness, you must promise me not to talk so frivolously again : it neither becomes your office nor your age." The bailiff nodded assent, although he would have rather dispensed with this last allusion.

" As a pledge of reconciliation," continued Margaret, " I have to solicit your compliance with a trifling request."

" I shall be honoured, madam," replied the bailiff gallantly, " in receiving your commands."

" A miserable Jewish maiden," said Margaret, " came to me this day sobbing, and begged that I would intercede with some influential person to procure the liberation of her father, who has been cast into prison upon some unknown charge. He is an industrious and not a dishonest man, as I can certify from various purchases which I have made from him in my own house. I should feel a great satisfaction in obtaining the poor man's release, if it were possible, and am therefore induced to request that you will exert your influence with the chief justice, to procure the Jew his liberty."

" One might almost envy the man his pu-

nishment in having so fair a pleader," replied the bailiff, with a leer; "I never interfere with the justice's proceedings; still, if a service can be rendered you, noble lady, I shall willingly make an exception to my rule. What is the Jew's name?"

"Ben David," replied Margaret, "the most respectable man in the Jews' quarter."

The bailiff frowned, and angrily shook his head. "I would not attempt to save that scoundrel, to gain the wealth of his whole tribe."

"No?" replied Margaret, in astonishment. "What crime has he committed?"

"One would suppose from your apparent astonishment," observed the bailiff, warmly, "that you really were ignorant of the atrocious offence with which the Jew stands charged, for what mother could know it, and feel an interest for such a villain?"

"What do you mean?" cried Margaret, with extreme agitation. "Tell me—a mother do you say?"

"Ay, indeed," resumed the bailiff, "can you imagine any thing more abominable? The dog has stolen a Christian child from his mother, and for a base bribe——"

Margaret could hear no more. She gasped for breath. At one moment pressing the little Hans to her bosom, at another turning from him with an expression of indescribable anguish, and at length sank down upon the floor overcome by the violence of her emotions! Little Hans was horror-struck, and, upon the bailiff coming forward to Margaret's assistance, uttered a piercing shriek. The busy functionary sprinkled her face with water, pressed a soft kiss upon her unconscious lips, when she raised her eyes, and became almost paralyzed with terror, upon finding herself in the arms of her importunate wooer; for at this moment she beheld Diether and Wallrade entering at the opposite door.

Astonishment and dismay were to be traced on every lineament of her agitated countenance. Upon Wallrade's there was a smile of malignant triumph. Diether's demeanour was so solemn and severe, that even the bailiff, with all his adroitness, found considerable difficulty in assigning any thing like a plausible reason for being surprised in so equivocal a situation. The poison of suspicion began to circulate in the elder's veins, and Wallrade's malice soon supplied food to the demon of jealousy that was

now stirred up into active vitality within him. The elder, who had attended the bailiff to the door, now re-entered the sitting-room, when Wallrade suddenly lifted up a cloth which lay upon the table. Under it was the golden rose, which in his hurry the bailiff had left behind him. Diether's sarcastic laugh aroused the sobbing Margaret, whose pale cheek became instantly suffused with crimson when she beheld the unlucky bauble in her husband's hand.

She felt as if suddenly chilled into a pillar of ice, upon hearing her husband's bitter sarcasms—"I cry you mercy, virtuous lady, you have doubtless made an unexceptionable choice; you have selected a very influential and portly personage to share your *private* friendship,—a man of birth too, elegant and sentimental; one, moreover, who knows how to bribe a lady's favour. The poor husband's offering cannot compete with the lover's; for while the former presents you with the badges of bondage, the latter lays at your feet the symbol of sensual delight."

"You wrong me, dear sir," replied Margaret, faintly, "this rose is not mine—your suspicions are unfounded."

"Unfounded!" exclaimed Diether, with a sardonic laugh, "just as unfounded as you are faithful; say no more, you ought to be overwhelmed with tenfold shame for having, in the presence of this child, forgotten one of your most sacred duties."

Margaret, unable to justify herself against such apparently damning proofs of her guilt, uttered not a word but wrung her hands in agony.

Wallrade, anxious to obtain possession of the boy, availed herself of the favourable opportunity which now presented itself, and taking his hand, said, "Come with me, child, your father is angry, and does not wish you should be here. Let us go into the garden." The boy instantly tore his hand from hers, and uttering a fearful cry, flew towards Margaret. "Let me alone, I dare not go with you, nor even speak to you; mother has forbidden it."

"Hear, father," said Wallrade, "what pains your wife has taken to excite a brother's hatred against his sister!" She endeavoured once more to induce the child to come to her, but his repugnance to approach her increased with every attempt she made to conciliate him.

"Let me alone," said he, "you want to make us beggars; you are the black woman, although you wear a red gown!"

Wallrade turned suddenly pale, and raised her arm to strike the boy, when he shrieked, and thus excited the attention of Margaret, who, exhausted as she was, placed herself before Wallrade, and exclaimed, "Wretch! dare but to touch this child, and——"

"Wife!" cried Diether, throwing himself between the women, "what has moved you to this? And you, Wallrade, explain the meaning of the boy's mysterious words."

"They are easily explained," said Wallrade, angrily. "Can you not perceive that they proceed from the hatred which has been purposely instilled into the child's heart? Your wife has represented me to the boy as a devil, and who ever painted the devil white?" The brat is an idiot, for he evidently looks upon me as nothing less!"

"Shame on thee, girl," replied Diether, indignantly. "I could almost consider you the devil you speak of, for calling my beloved child an idiot. Such are not the suggestions of a good heart. When it pleased God to give him

well-proportioned limbs and a comely frame, it pleased Him to endow him also with ready perceptions and a quick wit. Your abuse of him, therefore, is as unbecoming as it is sinful."

Wallrade drew down the corner of her mouth in scorn, but held her peace. Margaret, however, said, "You defend the child, but inconsiderately abandon the mother's reputation to the slanders of a malignant reviler. My agitation prevented me at first from combating your unjust accusations, as I was taken by surprise. I have now recovered my self-possession, and protest, under the sanction of God's most holy name, that both your suspicion and the insinuations of that wicked woman are equally unfounded! You may return this jewel to the bailiff, and ascertain from him the truth, to my honour and your own shame."

She was about to quit the room in haste, when Diether, detaining her, mildly said, "Heaven knows, Margaret, how painful it would be to me to do you an injustice. I cannot but believe you to be pure as the mountain spring, and that a malignant spirit has interrupted the harmony of our family, by sowing the seeds of dissension among us." So saying,

he took his wife's hand—" And may you," continued he, " offer this hand to my daughter at her departure, as a pledge of reconciliation, for she insists upon quitting Franckfort at sunrise."

" Your daughter may do as she pleases," replied Margaret, haughtily, while Wallrade, with her back turned towards them, was looking out at the window. " She has disdained my friendship; I, therefore, scorn to make any show of regard which does not proceed from the heart, by soliciting what I do not value. The only pleasure I could derive from offering her my hand would arise from the hope that it would be the last time I should ever have to do such a violence to my feelings."

" Obstinate woman!" said Diether, " it is your vanity which prevents you from making those concessions which your heart dictates to you to be just."

" I give the example of concession," said Margaret, coolly, " for I go, and leave your daughter a clear field."

" This is extremely laudable in you," replied Wallrade, in the same cold tone, and without changing her position at the window. " I will

not put you to this inconvenience however, for I take my place to-day at the table of the pious penitents at Waldburg."

"So much the better," said Margaret, with an indignant scoff, "and I wish you repentance from my heart."

So saying, she quitted the room, taking little Hans with her.

A conversation now ensued between Diether and Wallrade, as painful to the father as it was disgraceful to the daughter. "How gratefully you requite my tenderness towards you," said the former, "I thought I should have been enabled so to have accommodated matters as to leave you the inheritance which you so foolishly disclaim."

"Make it over before your death," said Wallrade in derision, "to those who would now joyfully sing a requiem over your grave; and when they have secured your property will cast you a paternal pauper upon your daughter's support. But let us now take leave. I have no pleasure in remaining where I am called a devil and a reviler. Let us say, farewell. A more welcome guest will soon occupy my place."

"Ingrate, that you are!" replied Diether, "have you not always been most welcome?"

"Perhaps to you," said Wallrade, with a fiendish smile, "but Dagobert, without dispute, is most welcome to your wife."

"Hush these base suspicions," exclaimed the distressed father. "What know you of Dagobert? Is it possible that he can be here without having paid his respects to his aged parent?"

"He has been here some days," replied Wallrade, "and, strange as it may appear, avoids his father's sight. Perhaps he dreads only *my* presence, or, probably, he may have a more important reason for avoiding *yours*."

"I protest I know not to what your insinuations tend," answered Diether, "my senses are in a vortex—Dagobert comes when you are going—"

"He acts wisely," said Wallrade, with a significant smile, "Farewell, father, and if Franckfort be not large enough for you, come to Baldengrün, where you will be ever welcome, when you come without your wife."

"Incomprehensible girl," said Diether, pressing her to his bosom, while a flood of tears gushed from his eyes; "women are in general

kindly affectioned towards children, let not then your little brother share in the dislike which you so unjustly harbour towards his mother. If you will not give him a parting kiss, let me be to him the bearer of a sister's love!"

"A sister's love?" asked Wallrade, with an equivocal emphasis, "I, his sister? Call me rather his aunt, dear father; ask the town, and if you remain still incredulous, consult St. George himself, who hangs over your wife's dressing-table.—Farewell! remember, father—farewell, and God be with you."

Wallrade hung round her father's neck for an instant, kissed his withered cheek, and then left him to his unquiet meditations. Overcome with anguish, the venerable man looked wistfully around him for some moments, and then fixed his eyes upon the picture of the Saint, whose countenance, although it represented the features of the once tenderly beloved Dagobert, he could not look upon without shuddering. Thus it is with the unhappy victim of suspicion; one word, one newly-awakened thought, can convert the most ardent affection into the most implacable enmity.

Diether, indeed, was enabled, by the firmness of his resolution, to suppress the bitter feelings which were taking possession of his heart; nevertheless, he could not regain his self-possession. Confidence was banished from his bosom, and thus, in spite of all his efforts to expel it, suspicion still maintained its ground. He embraced Margaret with fervour, who expressed her satisfaction that he had not detained Wallrade, and he caressed the child, which his wife placed playfully in his arms, without exhibiting the suspicion which was still busy within him; yet, whenever he compared the boy's features with the picture of the holy knight, a dagger seemed to be sent into his very soul.

The night, which succeeded this day of painful adventure, was none of the most delightful to the elder who, enfeebled by the excitement which he had so lately undergone, was haunted by portentous dreams; and like the miser, who in his slumbers sees nothing but robbers and assassins, Diether beheld the malicious smiles of Dagobert and the bailiff mocking him at his bed-side.

Scarcely had he been somewhat refreshed by

a morning doze, when a messenger announced to him the arrival of his son. The ingenuous youth could not help noticing the change in his father's manner towards him; but he ascribed to illness what was probably only the effects of a deluded mind. "Tell me, my dear father," said he, "whether a certain coolness and estrangement, which I perceive in your reception of me, be merely the effect of fancy or founded in truth; and if the latter, from what cause it proceeds. Tell me the real feelings of your heart, in order that we may come to a right understanding, and be again on our former footing."

Diether fixed his searching eye upon his son. "How happens it," said he, reproachfully, "that I am only now favoured with a visit from you, when you have been already some days in Franckfort?"

"I, father?" asked Dagobert, who was about to deny the fact. Diether, however, pressed the question still more peremptorily; he therefore thought it best candidly to tell him the truth. "It has never been the habit of my life to practice deception towards any one, much more towards a father whom I love and

honour. It is true that I arrived here the day before yesterday. My reason for avoiding your house—and be not angry with me for so doing—was because my malicious sister was continually about you. This day, however, I saw her carriage drive from your door, and I no longer delayed to present myself before you. I am come to participate with you in the Easter festivities, if it be God's and your good pleasure."

"You have not brought with you to the festivities a very Christian spirit," replied Diether moodily, "when the brother shuns the sister—encouraging hatred towards his own kindred."

Dagobert treated the matter lightly, and said, "You know, father, it was always so; what we have been accustomed to do in our childhood, too often becomes a fixed habit of our riper years. But how fares my little brother? Poor child, he used to suffer sadly from ill health, but I hear he is now perfectly restored. This really gives me exceeding joy, for I ought doubly to love him, because——."

"Because what?" asked Diether, quickly interrupting him.

"Because I am come to share the paternal

inheritance with him; for, as sure as you see me now before you, I have taken leave of the church—or rather the church has taken leave of me.”

“How?” asked Diether, “is it possible!”

“If you understood Latin,” continued Dagobert, “this document would soon convince you that it is true.”

The conversation now turned upon the younger ex-deacon’s conduct at Costaitz, and his treatment of his uncle. “Oh!” cried Dagobert, “I now perceive from what quarter the storm has proceeded. Wallrade, I see, has been setting all the elements of her malice at work to render me an unwelcome inmate of my father’s house. Just so, wherever the devil puts his arm, the whitest sleeve becomes black. Whatever my sister may have reported to you, father, believe me, it is false. However, as I shall have plenty of time for further explanation, suffer me now to go and embrace my little brother.”

“That wish may soon be accomplished,” replied Diether.

At this moment Margaret entered with the boy. She was visibly surprised at beholding

Dagobert, although not ignorant of his arrival. The surprise, however, arose from his change of dress and unusual gaiety of manner. She expected to see him in the frock and hood, with a serious countenance and a shorn crown, instead of which she beheld a gay young galliard, scented like a musk rose, tricked out as smartly as the son of a noble, and as fine as a tailor could make him, with a ruddy bloom upon his cheeks, and a sly twinkle of the eye, which caused his fair stepmother to suspect that he had become at once a votary of the god of wine and the god of love.

Who can control the movements of the human heart? The most painful recollections now rushed upon Margaret's mind. She thought of the day when she first entered into the elder's house;—of that fair season in the revolutions of life, when youth repudiates with disgust all idea of domestic contact with age, except in those from whom it derived its being, and stands in need of a youthful comforter, whose feelings are germane and congenial with its own. Such a friend, from whom she was separated by the stern regulations of society and the orders of the church, although linked

to her heart by the tenderest associations—this friend, who had so scornfully disdained her, and rendered her life a dull tissue of disappointments and regrets, stood now before her in the full development of manly beauty; recalling a painful recollection of past times. Her bosom swelled with agitation, while a crimson glow suffused her cheeks, which gave evidence alike of transport and of shame.

Dagobert had resolved to see his step-mother alone, in order to spare her the embarrassment which a sudden meeting might occasion, but her unexpected entrance forestalled his resolution. The surprise which she manifested upon seeing him, her sudden blush and downcast eye, communicated to him a confusion which he could but ill conceal. He felt the blood mount into his cheeks, stammered out a few words of welcome, and, by way of hiding his bashfulness, began to notice the child, who was looking at him inquisitively, but showed no disposition to shun him.

“Do you love me, Hans?” asked Dagobert, caressing him.

“Yes I do,” he replied, stroking the ex-deacon’s soft beard, “will you be my father?”

“Silly boy,” replied Dagobert, forcing a laugh, “who has put such a strange notion into your head? Have they taught you nothing better in Franekfort? There is your father,” pointing to Diether, who, with his back half turned towards them, could scarcely suppress the rage which was rising in his bosom, “he is my father also, and we must both be good sons and loving brothers. Beloved parents,” continued Dagobert, rising up and putting the child aside, “whatever Wallrade may have said to my prejudice, believe me, I am not what she would represent me. Honoured lady,” said he to Margaret, “cannot you explain to me the real cause of my father’s unkind reserve? Tell me why he entertains such hostility towards me?”

“His accident—” replied Margaret, hesitatingly, “his wound which is not yet closed.”—

“Alas!” said Dagobert, with a sigh, “if the knife had but fulfilled the assassin’s deadly purpose I should have been deprived of the best of fathers, and you of the best of husbands. I know not why I am so coldly received. I have never done you wrong, and I love your child, as if he were the son of my own mother. Has not Wallrade been the cause of my unkind reception?”

Margaret nodded assent, and Dagobert continued, "I have guessed but too rightly. The base calumniator—the heartless hypocrite ! but I will counteract her vile schemes. My father will not refuse to receive me once more into favour when he shall know the truth, and I am sure that in you, my second mother, I shall find a successful advocate."

"Rely upon me," said Margaret, warily, "if you prove to be deserving of my interference. I hope all will turn out well. My husband will not persist in his error if he finds you deserving. In my eyes," she continued, lowering her voice, "you are pure as this picture of the holy George." She now quitted the room with little Hans.

Dagobert could not recover the uneasiness which his father's cold reception had occasioned. He sat down absorbed in sorrowful reflection, wiped a tear from his eye, and then looked up at the picture of St. George. He paced the room for some moments, and then placed himself before it with his arms folded. "A sweet picture !" said he, endeavouring to dissipate the perturbations of his mind. "I never saw it before in my father's house. How

proudly the white horse prances ! how naturally the rider's brown locks flutter in the wind ! how majestically he bestrides the impetuous steed. I have surely seen that face somewhere ; and, if I mistake not, my little brother bears a resemblance to the saint. Truly a fine sprout from such a stock ! It is strange, but his features appeared, at first sight, so well known to me, that I could have sworn I had seen him at Gostnitz, or somewhere, within the last few months. This, however, must be mere fancy ; or might have been the shadowy image of a dream ; for the holy father, who undertook to prepare me for the priestly function, has often told me that there have been instances of persons having seen those in their dreams with whom they have afterwards formed an intimacy. Ah ! Esther, how often hast thou been the image of my past dreams, as thou frequently art of my present ! It is indeed surprising that an orthodox believer should so occupy his thoughts with one whom the laws both of God and man forbid him to unite himself to."

CHAPTER II.

ON the Saturday morning of Passion week considerable bustle prevailed in the courts of law. The Easter holidays were just at hand, and it was customary to put business in such a train that the festivities of the season might be enjoyed without inconvenience to any one. The clerks in the Chancery offices were all on the alert; the messengers waited at their posts to receive the orders of the counsellors; the ante-chambers were thronged with impatient clients, while pleaders were slipping about like eels, either inviting parties to compromise their causes, or persuading them to stand the contest before the bench. Creditors and debtors, guardians and their wards, sellers and purchasers, were continually running in and out, and the hum of voices was heard through the whole of that stately edifice where justice was dispensed,

with the exception of those rooms in which the fourteen judges, or the burgomaster and council were assembled. Junior clerks, looking as big as their betters, and laden with bundles of papers, flew up and down the stairs; while crabbed counsellors' lackeys grumbled in the passages. The elders, like turkey-cocks in a poultry-yard, stalked about with stately gravity, looking down upon the numerous country-squires, who left their peaceable homes, much against their wills, to succumb to the judicial authority of citizens.

Besides all these individuals, who were more or less employed about the courts, or interested in their decisions, a considerable number of idlers, who had already commenced the Easter festivities, were collected in the halls, sauntering idly about, as well as a numerous crowd of those who toil miserably for their daily bread. Many from this motley assemblage were standing before the spacious edifice; some held the horses of those who rode in from the country; others pointed out to strangers the different entrances to the Chancery court, while the most lazy among them either importuned the passengers for alms, or, supporting themselves

by the rails along the wall and stairs, formed a street of gapers, pointing their vulgar jokes upon every person who passed by.

For once, however, these noisy fellows gave their tongues a holiday, and with one accord directed their eyes towards the opposite street, as if in anxious expectation of witnessing some very unusual sight. It had, in fact, been reported, by one of the attendants of the criminal court, that the centenarian Jew and his son would upon this day be subjected to a private examination before the chief justice. The crowd enjoyed the most savage pleasure at the idea of beholding before them, in bitter affliction, two of that sect which they were in the habit of persecuting with the most cruel animosity. The Hebrew father and son had been in prison for some weeks, though the exact nature of their crime was not generally known. This only excited the people's curiosity the more, and they were inflamed with a most brutal desire to hear sentence pronounced against the unhappy criminals—a sentence which they hoped to see carried into immediate execution. In their opinion death was a mild punishment for Jews, and it was expected, therefore, that this punish-

ment would be inflicted in the most inhuman manner. The crowd waited with impatience for a sight of the victims, upon whom they were prepared to heap the most horrible maledictions as they passed, and to load with the vilest indignities. On a sudden a buzz was heard among the crowd. "See the red-headed Israelite who was baptized!—Look where he skulks from the curses of his own tribe, and of all good Christians!—What does he here?"

Zodiah, disappeared in the passage that led to the door of the criminal court.

At this moment a loud shout was heard among the mob assembled under the colonnades. Joachim and his son, two living pictures of woe, now appeared guarded by a numerous escort, some of whom were dragging them in chains over the steps of the building. They were squalid and macerated. The severe sufferings which they had undergone during their short, but dreadful, imprisonment, had made fearful ravages in the countenances of each; nevertheless their cheeks, usually of a deadly paleness, were now considerably flushed, and their eyes, which the filth of their dungeons had nearly deprived of sight, suddenly sparkled with

a pleasure long unknown to both, when they were brought once more into contact from the dreary prison in which they had been so cruelly immured. They had been kept in separate cells, from which all communication was denied them, and each was agonized by the miserable certainty that he did not suffer alone, but that one of the dearest objects of his affection was exposed to misery equal to his own. They did not see each other until the day of trial arrived, when the savage jailors, relaxing somewhat from their wonted inhumanity, allowed them to meet in the wretched garb of criminals. They were not, however, permitted to exchange a word. They silently embraced, but shed no tears, although their looks but too intelligibly revealed the bitter anguish of their hearts.

The two delinquents were habited in the coarse, close garment appointed to those committed under charges of felony. Their hair and beards were streaming with wet cast upon their heads from the windows under which they past, while their tottering limbs, loaded with ponderous fetters, bore them slowly along. Their wretched appearance might have excited compassion, even in the breast of a savage; they

were hailed by the unfeeling rabble with groans, hisses, and curses. Some derided, some reviled, while others assailed them with the most offensive missiles. The merciless mob felt no sympathy for the infirmities of age; and he whose brows were whitened with the snows of a hundred winters, was as much an object of their ferocious vengeance as his no less suffering but hardier son. The guard found it difficult to prevent the mob from proceeding to the last extremities against these unhappy criminals, even at the very threshold of the temple of justice. They could not, however, suppress the hootings of the unfeeling spectators, while the prisoners, loaded with upbraidings and menaces, were hurried up the stairs, at the top of which they were met by Joseph the Jewish physician, having just returned from attending a member of the council, who had been taken ill during the session. The physician made all possible haste down stairs, taking no notice of the salutations of his suffering brethren.

The doors of the criminal court were now thrown open, and Ben David and Joachim at length rescued from the indignities which had been so unmercifully heaped upon them.

Here they were only exposed to the heartless jests of the clerks and menials belonging to the court, until they were brought into the audience chamber, where the chief justice and his secretary awaited their arrival.

The austere judge, having regarded them sternly for some moments, ordered the keeper to release them from their fetters, and withdraw. This being done, the learned functionary, leaning backward in his great chair, and bidding his secretary take his pen, addressed the usual preliminary questions to the criminals.

Upon being asked his name and business, the elder replied, "Great Sir, my name is David Ben Joachim, my son's, Joachim Ben David, which, being interpreted, is Son of David. Our people, however, have been accustomed to call me Joachim, for the sake of brevity, and my son Ben David. We have ever been poor people, but industrious in our calling as brokers and pedlers, and honest money-lenders upon small interest. With the blessing of the merciful God, who numbers the hairs as well as the days of man, I have passed my hundredth year; and my son, if my memory fails not, his fiftieth summer. The Lord of Israel has ever

protected us in strange countries, and we never appeared before the high authorities of the state until the calamities, which have brought us now before you, overtook us. We have been dragged from our homes and our families, loaded with manacles, thrown into frightful dungeons, where slime and mildew covered the walls, and the most horrid filth the floors; our countenances are marred with weeping, and our eyes dim with woe; yet no one has told us whereof we are accused, while our hearts are as pure and undefiled as the rain before it falls upon the earth.

“Silence!” cried the judge, interrupting him, “a criminal never confesses himself to be guilty until he is proved so.—The greatest malefactor, according to his own account, is the most innocent sufferer. You shall shortly learn the reason of your imprisonment, but I would advise you first to repent, and confess your crime.”—“How can we confess what we are ignorant of?” asked Ben David. “We know that we are guiltless. The High and Holy One which inhabiteth eternity will not accuse us of breaking his sabbath in standing before a court of justice on that holy day, for necessity is beside

all law, and we are here against our own wills."

"Silence!" again cried the legal dignitary. "Who concerns himself about the day on which you bend the knee to Baal? I ask you, both father and son, one question:—What has become of the Christian child which, about five months since, you dragged into your den of infamy in the Jews' quarter?"—Both the prisoners started at this question.

"Now," continued the judge peremptorily, "answer me, whence came that child?"

"I know of no child," replied Ben David immediately, before the hesitating Joachim could utter a syllable.

The old man, however, whose agitation was extreme, delayed not a moment in attesting the declaration of his son.

"You know nothing of it, then?" asked the judge, keenly scrutinizing them. "You have never seen a Christian child in your house, I suppose?"

"As God is our protector!" replied Ben David, evading the question, "we know not of what child you are speaking."—"My great age," added Joachim, who would neither openly avow,

nor deny the implied charge, "makes me forgetful; I cannot recollect"—

"Your falsehood," said the chief justice sternly, "will only render your sentence the more severe."

"God will succour us, and have compassion upon his people Israel," replied Ben David, turning his eyes towards heaven. "We are innocent, do with us what you will. We have always paid our taxes like honest people, and presented our annual offerings. We have neither clipped the lawful moneys of the realm, nor circulated base coin. We have neither defrauded nor been guilty of extortion; we have taken usury of no one, but only reasonable interest from respectable counsellors, and have always offered our little mite to serve them. We can discover no fault in ourselves deserving of such cruel proceedings as you have instituted against us, and if our brethren have erred, it is of little consequence to us; for, says the mighty Elohim, "Every one shall receive according to his works."

"Is this the language of your self-idolatry?" replied the judge scornfully. "We have nothing to do now with your brethren, but with you,

and since you will not confess the crime for which you have been arraigned, I will have it brought home to you by indisputable testimony."

So saying, he rang the bell, and upon a servant entering, whispered into his ear; when he withdrew, and instantly ushered in Ben David's sabbath-maid, who came reluctantly forward, with a rosary hanging over her folded hands, and tears trickling down her pale cheeks. She made a low curtsy to the judge, and bent still lower to the image of the Redeemer, which hung over the judicial chair, then directing an oblique glance at the accused, crossed herself on the breast, and hung down her head.

"You swear," said the judge, "in the name of the Holy Trinity, to speak the truth according to your conscience, without guile? Bow your head in token of assent." The old woman did as she was told, while every limb trembled.

The chief justice, after having questioned her as to her name, calling, and the length of time she had been in the service of the accused, proceeded to question her upon the subject of a Christian child, when the poor creature, terrified by his threats and the fear of punishment, acknowledged, that Ben David had some time since

brought home a Christian boy, on his returning from an excursion in the country ; that she had lodged him two nights in her room, and that, on the third he disappeared, and had never since been heard of.

“ Did you not perceive,” continued the judge, “ that one of these Jews evinced a particular dislike to the boy ? ”

After a little reflection, the old woman nodded assent, and pointed to old Joachim.

“ Do you now admit,” said the judge, “ the truth of what this witness deposes against you ? ”

Ben David flatly denied any knowledge of the affair, and Joachim, who expected the reply his son would give, persisted without hesitation, in the same denial. The judge’s countenance was now flushed with a deep crimson. he again rang the bell, when, after a short interval of dreadful suspense to the accused, Zodiah entered the chamber. Without paying the least regard to the horror with which both Joachim and Ben David were seized at his appearance, he fearlessly approached the judge, and placed himself before the judgment table, with his eyes steadfastly fixed upon the cross.

The judge now commanded him upon oath as he had done to the former witness, to speak the truth ; when Zodiah began as follows :

“ Five months have nearly elapsed, and the Jews were about celebrating the last sabbath of the month, when Ben David, my former master, who now stands a prisoner before you, returning from an excursion in the country, which he frequently made on business, brought with him a boy of Christian birth. I was confined to my bed in consequence of a wound which some wicked people had inflicted upon me, and did not see the child. Neither Ben David nor his daughter communicated the circumstance to me; but Joachim, with the natural garrulity of age, put me in possession of his son’s secret. As I was greatly tormented with the pain arising from my wound, I at first paid little attention to the old man’s gossip. The day after the habdallah, however, my wound having begun to heal rapidly, I kept my bed for the sake of quiet, when about dusk, the elder prisoner entered my room and said to me, ‘ Arise, Zodiah, if you are a good servant of my son, and your bodily sufferings permit, and follow me quickly with a shovel and a hoe.’ ‘ Immediately, sir,’

I replied, for at that time I respected the old man as all Jews are accustomed to do, since he knows and expounds the law. I followed him, as he marched on rapidly in spite of his age, down a dark flight of steps to the cellar, in the vault of which he halted, and ordered me to strike a light, which he placed in a candlestick that he drew from under his coat. This being done, he seated himself upon a stone, and said, 'Now, my good lad, dig me a hole of about a pace and a-half in length, and a pace in breadth.' Imagining he intended to bury some precious things, I did not hesitate a moment in obeying his command. Upon his ordering me, however, to dig the hole two yards deep, I felt some surprise. 'Sir,' said I, 'you must deposit here a vast deal of property, if you mean to fill only the half of this hole.' He called me, however, a talkative busy-body, and ordered me to proceed with my work. I did so, and while so occupied, he said to me, 'Have you never heard that the heart of a boy from Mount Seir,* when torn from his panting breast on the night of the Amalekitish sab-

* A name for Christendom, as Edom, Amalek, &c.

bath, burnt to dust, and drunk on the evening of the feast Haman in holy wine, brings fortune and great riches?' I looked at him with astonishment, but did not utter a word. Having finished my labour, and laid the earth on a heap, I was ordered to stop up the air-holes of the vault with straw and wood, after which the old man desired me to go and tell my master that all was done in the name of the prophet Elias. Upon reaching the cellar-door, however, I met him, bearing on his shoulder a boy, sunk in a profound sleep. He started back upon perceiving me, when old Joachim said to him, angrily, 'Why do you come skulking here at such an improper time? It was determined the servant should first tell you that all was ready.' Ben David stammered out an excuse, and told me to take the lamp which he had brought with him, and go immediately to bed. I left the vault, when the bolts of the door were instantly fastened against me. I could not, however, rest; so taking off my shoes, and extinguishing the light, I proceeded to the little court, and looked into the cellar, through a crack which I had purposely left open. I was stupified with horror at what I beheld.

Ben David had undressed the child, who had been awakened by the cold. The old man then approached him as he was shivering and screaming with terror, and asked him, as Jews are wont to ask, on the festival Jom Kippur, ' Offspring of the uncircumcised, wilt thou be my kappora, or sacrifice?' Ben David made the boy nod his head, when Joachim immediately put a gag in his mouth, during which the poor little victim's eyes appeared to be starting out of their sockets, like those of a lamb bound for the slaughter. The elder prisoner then drew a rough wooden cross from the corner, when his son, stretching the tortured boy upon it, the father, burning with the lust of cruelty, while his hands quaked with the feebleness of age, nailed the screaming victim to the accursed tree, muttering the Hebrew prayer used upon such occasions—

Upon the head of this sacrifice be our sins !
May its soul be hurled into eternal death !
And ours, with all our tribe's, into eternal life !
May fear and trembling cover thee, O Gojim !
Mount Seir, cursed ever be thy dwellings !
Accursed be thy tents, O Amalek !
Ammon, Moab, Edom, be ye all accursed !

“ During the prayer, Ben David spat in the face of the gasping infant, and exclaimed, in derision, ‘Thou art saluted king in Israel! Great and blessed be thou, prince of the Jews!’ Hereupon he seized the lamp, and made a sign to his father to despatch him. The old man then took up a polished knife, first consecrated it in the blood which was streaming from the limbs of his victim, then drew a bloody cross upon his breast, just above the heart”—

“ May’st thou be engulfed in everlasting fires, vile apostate! thou son of the old serpent!” exclaimed Joachim, with a shriek, interrupting the horrible narrative, and sank to the ground, convulsed with terror. Ben David, although himself scarcely able to stand, assisted his aged father; then, turning his tearless eyes towards heaven, awaited his doom. The judge, however, took no notice of the prisoners, but ordered the witness to conclude his evidence.

Zodiah proceeded: “ The child rendered up his soul under the raaf’s sacrificial knife; but what became of his remains I know not. Whether they buried his little body, or threw it into the river, I am utterly ignorant; for I departed from the scene while they were

contending this point. Joachim was for the former, and Ben David for the latter. I could no longer live in the house of assassins; I therefore took the earliest opportunity of breaking off all connexion with Joachim and his son. This is the plain truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me, the merciful God, who has rescued me from heresy, and restored me to the only true faith!—Amen!”

A solemn silence prevailed throughout the court. Joachim lay on the ground, insensible; Ben David was dumb with horror; the old sabbath-maiden offered up her silent prayers for the salvation of the soul, which had been so frightfully sacrificed; Zodiah was exhausted with his exertions; and even the judge and his secretary, accustomed as they were to the most fearful details, were obliged to pause, before they could recover from the effects which the last witness's appalling testimony had produced upon them. The judge, at length regaining his self-possession, fixed his eyes upon Ben David, and said, in a voice of thunder, “You have heard, monster! the crime whereof you stand accused. Can you gainsay what these testify against you?” It is an inmate of your house, and one

of your own persuasion, who has unveiled the monstrous atrocity of which you and your father have been guilty. Will you now add falsehood to murder, and thus sharpen the sword of retribution?"

"Sir!" replied Ben David, shuddering, "I would speak, but horror overpowers me, and deprives me of power to give you a full answer to this atrocious charge. I could swear that we are innocent, by the holy and anointed God! by the graves of our forefathers—and all that is sacred to us in Israel! you, however, would not believe us, for we are Jews. I could produce to you the testimony of my innocent daughter, Esther; but you would say that this avails nothing, because it is the testimony of a Jew's daughter. Why, then, do you believe an apostate servant? Why believe the maid who, in her simplicity, answers yes to every question, because she has been schooled to do so. I repeat, that we are innocent of the horrid act, with which we have been charged."

The judge gave Ben David another severe rebuke for his loquacity, and assured him, that he would himself visit the cellar, in order to investigate the truth, and where he should, no

doubt, discover sufficient to confirm the depositions of the last witness, and thus unmask, on the concluding day of our Lord's Passion, two murderers, who had turned into scornful derision, worthy in itself of death, his holy name and great work of redemption."

The bell was rung once more, and upon the attendants appearing, the judge ordered the elder criminal to be lifted from the ground, adding, "His swoon is nothing but a trick. The knave is as old in deceit as in years. The truth alone, which he cannot contradict, sunk him to the earth. Bind him, and drag him again to his dungeon. Put the heaviest shackles, also, upon the younger criminal, and consign them to separate cells." The judge then left the chamber with his secretary, Zodiah and the servant-girl following him.

One of the attendants was now ordered to fetch the executioner and his assistants, while the other went to the door to tell the issue of the examination to the anxious multitude. The prisoners were thus left alone for a few minutes, when Ben David kissed the hands of his reviving father. "Alas!" said the exhausted old man with a sigh, "it was indeed no dream.

I am too old to make any pretension to longer life, for I have already nearly made up the sum of two human lives ; but thou, my son—and Esther ! What will become of us, David, if thou still persistest in silence, and declarest not whither thou hast taken the child of Edom ?”

“ I dare not do so, father,” replied Ben David, firmly, “ I should render wretched those who now are happy. I have promised silence, and my vow shall be inviolable.”

“ And if you have sworn to be silent,” resumed Joachim, earnestly, “ I will, as a true teacher in Israel, release you from such oath, for it cannot be valid when imposed by the children of Amalek.”

“ Father,” replied Ben David, “ you may release me from the oath, but you cannot release me from the obligation to which a solemn promise binds every honest man. My confession would be little worth : it would cost me my head, Esther her property, and reduce you to beggary and shame.”

“ Alas !” exclaimed the father, mournfully, “ in what traffic have you been engaged ? Money is good, but life is better. If you must die, and Esther become a pauper, I no longer

desire to live. Wretchedness and hunger at the end of a hundred years are worse than death."

"Be pacified, father," rejoined Ben David, "we shall not die—you shall not starve. Those who know what I have to reveal, will come to our assistance before it is too late.—Rely upon this!"

"But if they put us to the torture," observed the old man, anxiously, "they will dismiss our souls from this world as quickly as the hand of the Lord can do it. My son, my son, trust not to the promises nor to the assistance of Gojim! Do we not daily pray, Lord, build up again the sacred Zion, the city of our God, and his holy temple? Let the Messiah be born, and come, and we will call him like unto thee, the Son of David? And yet Zion is not built, neither is the Messiah come; and so shall we be destroyed before advice and assistance reach us, the victims at once of your unholy dealings and inveterate obstinacy."

"Do you then despair so utterly of the assistance of God, to whom be all praise?" asked Ben David, seizing the hand of his father, whose thoughts were painfully balanced between belief and doubt. "Have you no confi-

dence even in your own innocence, the voice of which will finally liberate us from the flimsy web of falsehood which has been so maliciously spun around us ? ”

“ Ah ! ” cried the old man, with a sigh which expressed at once his doubt and alarm, “ there are voices which travel from one end of the world to the other, but the voice of innocence is not among them.”

“ Be not cast down, father,” said Ben David, mildly. “ Let us but keep steady to the faith, and we shall not be deserted in the hour of trial.”

The guard now entered, replaced their fetters upon the old man and his son, and conducted them through an innumerable crowd to the gate of the prison, where the executioner and his assistants waited upon the steps to receive them.

CHAPTER III.

DAGOBERT felt but ill at ease in his father's house. Diether exhibited towards him, a disposition indeed somewhat less morose, but his kindness might be compared to a November sun, cold and obscured by the fogs of ill-nature.

Dagobert, therefore, found little pleasure in a house where he saw nothing but mournful countenances, for even Margaret had become a prey to melancholy. The two days which he had already passed with his parents, appeared to him to have crept so tardily along, that a snail would have outstripped them in their race; and, with a view of dissipating his unquiet thoughts by change of scene, he ordered Vollbrecht to saddle the horses, and attend him on a ride out of town. The groom was well pleased with this order, the horses were forthwith

saddled, and master and man were soon in the country.

Dagobert, observing in the distance a house standing upon a gentle elevation, said, "That is a small property belonging to my father, where I passed many a happy day when I was a boy. It is a long time since I last visited those venerable walls, and I should feel a pleasure in saluting old Crescentia, who is our factress, and frequently refreshed me in my blither days, with a cup of new milk and some juicy cherries. As we have no particular object in view in this excursion, I think we cannot do better than ride up to the old woman's dwelling."

The horses proceeded at a gentle trot up the broad road which led to the house, and the riders soon alighted at a narrow gate, encircled with vines. Two lean stunted dogs, which were enjoying the warm sunshine, barked about the horses, while a woman, stricken in years, but whose countenance was nevertheless not unpleasing, peeped over the wicket, and welcomed the visiter.

"Madonna," said Dagobert, as he held out his hand to her, "I am truly happy to

find you alive and merry. Do you know me again."

"Oh! why should I not know you?" replied the woman joyfully, at the same time opening wide the gate, "my eyes are still the better part of my old body. A face like yours is not so easily forgotten,—enter, my dear young master."

The ex-deacon followed her very readily, and entered a small room, which Crescentia put in order by rubbing down the table, driving the cat from the fire-place, and the hen from the window-shutter. She then drew an old arm-chair to the hearth and invited her guest to sit.

Dagobert, whose recollections were carried back to the years of his childhood, looked round the little chamber, and found every article of furniture exactly as it had formerly stood. "How happy was I once here!" said he; "much happier than I am now, and I was indebted for this happiness, good Crescentia, to you."

"I do not see," replied the old woman, "why you should not enjoy as much happiness now as you did formerly? I am sure you deserve to be happy, for that honest countenance

can never be a false index of your heart. My husband was often wont to say, 'Oh! that I could live to see the young gentleman our master. His father, indeed, is a good man, but the son would be tenfold better.' We did not, however, then know that you were intended for the church."

Crescentia now mentioned that Wallrade had recently visited the little farm, and had made every inquiry into the rent and produce, conducting herself as imperiously as if her father were already in his coffin, and she had been left sole heiress.

"Humph!" said Dagobert, "it may not be quite as she expects; however, good Crescentia, let us change the subject, as it is not agreeable for a brother to listen to the actions of a sister, when he can hear no good of her. I am come to chat with you, good soul, concerning your own little cares."—"Ah!" rejoined the old woman, smiling, "what can I tell you that could prove amusing to a person of your great learning? Of cares, thanks be to Heaven, I have few. The little pleasures I enjoy, I either procure for myself, or the seasons provide them for me. It was a bad time for me when my

Wolfram died. Your father had just married his second wife, and your stepmother took upon herself the management of every thing. There was an immediate change through the whole household. She was young and thoughtless—found things too old and shabby—they were consequently discarded and new supplied. I had the misfortune to incur the lady's anger by neglecting to pay her due reverence upon her visit to the farm: I was accordingly dismissed. A poor widow, without means, and mother of a helpless girl, I knew not where to look for support. My husband, moreover, had left debts which I could not pay: reserving, therefore, to myself only the garment upon my back, I was about to lay my rosary on my husband's grave,* and beg my bread with my child from door to door, when a humane friend rescued us from the most abject state of poverty. We repaired to the nearest village, and were supported under our bereavements, by this kind protector. I procured myself food by labour, and the charity

* This was a custom sanctioned by law, whenever a widow could not liquidate her husband's debts. Having declared her insolvency upon oath, this act absolved her from all pecuniary obligations.

of that generous benefactor supplied our other wants. In the mean time an Italian was put into the farm, who wasted the property and defrauded his master. Our friend first exposed his villany, and, at his intercession, I was restored, after having been obliged to avoid the house for six miserable months. My mistress, who is not deficient in goodness of heart, wishing to make amends for her former severity, has since treated me with great kindness, and two years ago took my Else into her service as a waiting-maid. From that time I have led a solitary life. Spring gladdens my heart with its blossoms, summer with its wheat-sheaves, and autumn with its fruits.

“And what does winter?” asked Dagobert, taking up the discourse. “How is it with you, then? You are not only exposed to the biting blasts of the cold north winds, but you are also at the mercy of robbers and assassins, to whom you can offer no resistance in your solitude.—“And why not?” asked Crescentia, with a smile. “I have a couple of stout fellows always at hand; besides which, I am never so perfectly alone. To-day, indeed, is an exception, as my people are gone to town to be present at the

Jews' trial. I could not accompany them, but am nevertheless anxious to know the issue, because I am particularly interested about one of the prisoners, and am at a loss to conjecture what crime he can have committed."

"Whom do you mean?" asked Dagobert, who had paid great attention to her last words.

"The poor man, Ben David," rejoined Crescentia, "who is with his father in prison, and was that very benefactor who supported me and my child for half a year."—"What do you say?" exclaimed Dagobert vehemently, "the Jew Ben David about to take his trial? Are he and his venerable father still in prison? By heavens! I must away forthwith. The horses, Vollbrecht!"—"Why this extraordinary anxiety, my dear sir?" asked Crescentia. "Do you know the Jew? Have you learnt any thing concerning the charge against him?"

All her questions were unheeded, and her entreaties to prolong his stay disregarded, for Dagobert being already on horseback, dashed down the main-road at full speed, and soon reached the town. He instantly proceeded to the Jews' quarter; here, however, he was obliged to pull up his horse, as the street was

thronged with people. The eyes of all were directed towards Ben David's house; while every tongue was in motion. The inhabitants of the street kept themselves concealed within their houses, a guard was placed at Ben David's door, and just at that moment a female, dressed in the costume worn by women in small country towns, was carried out of the house into the street in a swoon.

"What is the matter here?" inquired Dago-
bert of a fellow who, by the colour of his dress,
appeared to be a journeyman tanner.

"The Jew's cellar has been examined," replied the journeyman; "I have been down into it myself. The body of the murdered child, indeed, has not been found, for the rascals have thrown it into the Main, but many other things have been discovered—what a game these scoundrels have been secretly carrying on!"

"What things have you discovered?" asked a thousand voices at once. "Fragments of dress, marked with blood," continued the tanner; "coarse, as well as fine clothing—the whole evidently stolen—a necklace, too, of precious stones, the property of the poor woman who lies there in a swoon."

“ Every one of you has heard of the beautiful Eve of Berger. Young Hermann, the butcher of Friedberg, was the envy of the whole neighbourhood, when he made the charming maiden his bride. Only look at her now, and see if you can discover on that pallid countenance, one mark of former loveliness; and yet it is the once beautiful Eve of Berger, who is now lying insensible before you. Her husband was killed on his return to Friedberg, with his young wife’s dowery, and the necklace with the deep red stones, which was a bequest of her grandmother, formed a part of it; this has been now found in the cellar of the abominable Jew.”

“ That is false,” cried Dagobert, in a voice of thunder.

The fellow stared at him a moment with his mouth open; and then replied, surlily, “ If you know better than I do, you should have told *your* story to these good people. They have heard mine; and will find it the true one.”

Dagobert was about to spur his horse upon the saucy knave, but Vollbrecht, who evinced a wiser discretion, checked the rash intention. “ Consider, sir,” said he, “ what a

superiority of numbers we should have to contend with, we had better go on." "No!" replied Dagobert, fiercely; "in spite of the devil and all his legions, I will see the end of this abominable mummary."

The mob now pressed in a closely-wedged mass towards Ben David's door, which at this moment was opened, and the justice, fired with indignation, stepped over the threshold. He was followed by servants, with baskets and bundles containing the property which had been discovered in the cellar; then appeared Zodia, with an air of malignant triumph, and immediately behind him were the prisoners, guarded by soldiers. The procession was closed by the executioner and his assistants, for the chief justice had commanded them to attend him, in order to overawe the multitude. The mob, upon beholding the culprits, set up anew their yells, assailing them with all kinds of abuse, and pouring out upon them the most horrible execrations.

Amid these yells, which could be compared only to the howlings of bloodthirsty wolves, Esther rushed from the door of her father's house. Her pale, but sweet countenance,

agitated with the most heartrending emotions, her hair hanging in all its beautiful luxuriance, down her shoulders, and almost entirely concealing the upper part of her person, except when she now and then flung it back in her agony, and exposed her features, still lovely, though almost convulsed with agony. She had only just learned her father's and grandfather's dreadful situation, as all access to them had been denied her. She forced her way through the crowd, threw herself at Ben David's feet, pressed his hands with fervency to her heart, bathed those of old Joachim with her tears, when the mob forced her back with brutal violence. Vain were all her lamentations; in vain she offered whatever article of value she had about her, only to be allowed the favour of passing a few moments with her unhappy parent; her entreaties, however, were rejected by the guard, and when at last they could no longer control their feelings, at the sight of so much beauty in distress, the executioner advanced in haste to perform what was repugnant to the hearts of these brave soldiers. At the moment, however, when he stretched out his hand to seize Esther, he received such a well-

directed blow on the scone, as arrested his brutal intention. The man started back, and looking round in astonishment, beheld Dagobert, with the heavy handle of a large whip upraised ready to repeat the visitation, if necessary, who cried out, "Keep off, muckworm; if you attempt once more to pollute this maiden by your infectious touch, I will break every bone in your leprous skin!"

The executioner called for help, but the multitude only derided him, and sufficiently showed by their mockeries, how delighted they were at seeing him so roughly handled.

At this moment the great dignitary of the law approached. "What is doing here?" said he, "who dares to interfere in favour of the Jewess?"

"I dare," replied Dagobert, boldly. "I, sir, Dagobert Frosch, the son of the elder, Diether Frosch."

"Shame upon you!" cried the justice. "Here, gaoler, seize this impertinent intruder, and bear him away."

"It shall cost the scoundrel his ears," replied Dagobert, drawing his sword, "if he dare lay a hand upon me. Let him not attempt

it. Shame upon you, rather, as a dispenser of justice, to have such rascals in your retinue. Let the hangman seize the guilty, not the innocent!"

"The Jewess," said the gaoler, interrupting him, "has acted against orders, having appeared in the streets without a veil and Jew's mark. She must, consequently, submit to wear the iron collar, and her fine flowing locks are my property, unless she redeems them with money."

"Say rather you are the devil's property, you villanous gaol whelp," exclaimed Dagobert, in a rage; "is the maiden to be sacrificed because, in the anguish of her heart, she forgot your order?"

"She is one of a bad brood!" cried the just judge.

"A Jew is a man as well as yourself," replied Dagobert, in a tone of fierce determination; "and, to make short of the matter, you and your myrmidons will do well to let the maiden depart in peace, or I shall treat you, not as men, but as brutes. You have your warning."

The gaoler, frightened at Dagobert's menacing attitude, skulked quietly off; and at the

same moment the justice made a sign to the guards to advance with the prisoners; who, in the mean while, however, had embraced the opportunity of exchanging a few words with Esther.

It now became Dagobert's task to rescue the lovely Jewess from the ferocious populace, who only awaited the departure of the justice to visit an innocent daughter of Abraham with the most inhuman marks of their unjust indignation. "Come with me, my maiden," said the ex-deacon; "I will liberate you." Esther approached, her heart overflowing with gratitude, while her cheeks were bedewed with tears. Neither the elder's son nor the justice had been sparing of mutual reproaches; but as soon as the latter had withdrawn, the former succeeded, with considerable difficulty, after encountering the hootings and peltings of the populace, in conveying Esther, at her own desire, without the walls of the town.

Esther now entered into an affecting detail of the sufferings which she had lately undergone. Both Joachim and her father being in prison, her home was no longer to her a place of security: she has been therefore driven from door

to door, whilst every neighbour and supposed friend refused her a temporary asylum, upon the plea of her being the daughter of so great a criminal. At last she found a secure shelter, as she thought, in the house of Joseph, the Jewish physician: "But, alas!" added Esther, "how have I been deceived! Never can I forgive his base conduct towards me! Never can I return to the house of that abominable man!"

"What was the conduct you allude to?" asked Dagobert, trembling with anxiety.—"Speak, child! I must know it! Nay, no evasion—I must know it!"

Esther hid her face in her hands.—"He wished to sell me to the bailiff. I was to purchase my father's liberty by——spare me!"—and she sunk at Dagobert's feet.

"Villain!" exclaimed Dagobert, gnashing his teeth.

"I resisted the monster! I was kindled with indignation at his iniquitous proposal!" continued the agitated Esther; "when, with the heartlessness of a disappointed ruffian, he revealed to me my father's supposed crime; telling me that he had been dragged, at that mo-

ment, in chains, to his own house. Without a moment's hesitation, I rushed into the street, overcome by a host of contending emotions—all stretching my mind upon the rack of agony, but resolving never again to enter the doors of the detested Joseph."

"God forbid that you should!" said Dagobert, striking the hilt of his sword. "I will not forget the gross-bodied scoundrel, should he ever cross my path. But where, fair maiden, do you now think of seeking an asylum? Where dwell the friends or relatives who take an interest in your fate?"

"Alas! sir, I have neither friends nor relations who take an interest in my fate!" replied Esther, despondingly. "I have no one who is bound in duty to succour me. I will seek a shelter wherever I can find one: make my bed in a stable—repair every day to town—throw myself at the feet of my father's guards, beseech them to have compassion upon me, and allow me a sight of him in his imprisonment! For once, perhaps, my prayer may be heard, and I may be allowed to remain in prison with that venerated being to whom I owe my existence."

"Dear girl!" said Dagobert, in deep con-

cern, "afflict me not by uttering such a desperate resolution. What! give yourself up to the furious rabble, from whom I have just rescued you? That I cannot accede to."

Vollbrecht was gaping with open mouth at the extraordinary scene before him; when Dagobert ordered him to lead the horses home. He obeyed, though with evident reluctance.

When the servant was gone, Dagobert proceeded with Esther along the road. "You must do me a favour," said he to her.

"What is it, good sir?" she asked, fixing her soft bright eyes upon him.—
"Speak!"

"Next to my father!" said Dagobert, "you alone occupy my heart. I conducted you from Costnitz, and deported myself toward you on the road as a man of honour."

"Heaven is your witness," affirmed Esther, whilst a tear of gratitude sparkled in her eye, "that you treated me as a respectable burgheress, and not as a degraded Jewess. May God reward you for it, and also for the protection you have this day afforded me!"

"Would you further confide in me?" asked the ex-deacon, tenderly.

"To the last moment of my life, sir," replied Esther, with energy.

"You have already intrusted me with your property," he continued. "I am in possession of Duke Frederick's letter—but you must intrust me with your person also."

"Willingly, sir," replied the maiden, without the slightest hesitation.

"Will you consent to accept the asylum which I will provide for you," said the youth, fixing his placid eyes upon her.

"An asylum did you say, sir?" asked Esther in surprise, "and with you, too! that surely would not become a virtuous maiden."

"Certainly not with me," replied Dagobert, smiling, "but with a worthy female friend of mine: what do you think of that?"

"I can have no scruples in acceding to such a kind proposal," replied Esther, joy beaming upon her expressive countenance. "I am ready to go wherever you may please to conduct me."

"Come, then, with me, and I will conduct you to a home. Old Crescentia wishes me well, and next to our blessed Saviour she has the greatest reverence for your father. There, poor stricken lamb, thou wilt be secure."

CHAPTER IV.

A BRILLIANT sun ushered in the morning of Easter-day, yet the assembly-rooms at Limpurg displayed on that evening a still greater brilliancy. The apartments were decorated as if for a nuptial banquet. Draperies of various colours were hung round the windows, large sconces and chandeliers were fixed to the walls and ceilings, and the floors were covered with costly carpets. Tables were sumptuously laid out in the saloon, in which the banquetings and balls were usually given. They were covered with cloths of a snowy whiteness, the corners of which were plaited in elegant folds. A splendid sideboard, as well as the tables, was loaded with magnificent vases and a profusion of massy plate. The goblets were encircled with garlands, appropriately selected for the festival, while large dishes, filled with choice

confectionary were placed around the room, by way of a light refection until the supper should be announced. The greater part of the company was collected in the spacious antechamber around a superb stove, the sides of which were adorned with the town arms, in variegated relief. The walls were emblazoned with the names of the principal families of Limpurg, and at one end of the room was suspended a long catalogue of the different masters and associates, while the various regulations of the society were inscribed on huge tablets of parchment.

The company were variously occupied—some were conversing upon the novelties of the day, some were relating the jokes they had been practising upon their friends or mistresses, while others displayed the superb Easter presents which had been conveyed to them either in elegant baskets or on silken cushions, scented and embroidered with the most entertaining mottoes. Notwithstanding the variety of topics which were discussed, the whole company appeared as if engaged but upon one. Two gentlemen alone, the bailiff and the justice, had

retired apart from the company, and were observed to be in earnest discourse.

“You would greatly oblige me,” said the latter, “if you would expose the young coxcomb to ridicule. You have a better opportunity of doing so than I have. He will scarcely come in my way.”

“He has come in mine once too often,” replied the bailiff. “Give yourself no concern, dear sir; I have no doubt but I shall soon be able to afford you information upon more important matters, for I have grounds for supposing that certain connexions exist in that house which the world little thinks of.”

“Do you think so?” asked the justice; “if it be really so, that would supply water for my mill, and if the affair were of a description to furnish employment for the lawyers, so much the better.”

“At present I promise nothing,” replied the bailiff; “time will show what steps I had best pursue.”

It was the bailiff’s duty, as master of the ceremonies, to see that every thing was placed in due order upon the table, and just as he was

about to summon the company to supper, the elder Diether Frosch came up to him, and requested a few moments conversation with him. The portly man coloured at this unexpected meeting, but quickly regained his composure, and said, "Welcome, my dear elder, we have been anxiously expecting you and your truly excellent lady. I hope you have brought her with you?"

"I have not, sir," replied Diether, coldly, "Yet I bring with me two messages for you from my truly excellent lady, as you are so flatteringly pleased to term her, which I must deliver before you sit down at table. When you last did me the honour of a visit you left behind you a golden rose, which my wife thinks much too costly for her, she has therefore commissioned me to return it to you. Moreover, you have kindly condescended—truly it was very flattering—to send your boy this morning to my house with a white basket, containing a silver pomegranate enclosing an amorous posy—in sooth it was very kind—as an Easter present to my most excellent lady."

"Old Diether, who, like most men of sixty, sleeps little and rises early, found the boy this

morning waiting at his wife's door, and took the elegant present from him, much, no doubt, to your dissatisfaction as well as to his own. He now, in the name of his wife, returns you both these tender offerings, the golden rose and the silver pomegranate, and at the same time presumes to request, that you will never again attempt to interrupt the harmony of his household by such liberal displays of kindness towards one whom the laws of honour forbid to receive them. He is not at all anxious that his house should be converted into a stew."

The bailiff, who had read the old man's feelings in his crabbed looks, snatched the trinkets out of his hand, saying, "You have chosen a very strange time, sir, to insult me, when we are surrounded by persons who can easily perceive by your manner, what has been passing between us. You may, however, inform your wife, that these presents were intended for other esteemed friends of mine, and that they must have been left by mistake at your house. Tell her, moreover," continued he, tauntingly, "that I am not such a drone as to wish to eat honey from a hive in which a foolish old father and an amorous young son have been alike cloying

their appetites. Be assured, however, good sir," added he, with a bland smile, in order to mislead the persons around him, "that I will think of you this evening after supper."

These words, which the bailiff uttered as he turned his back upon the elder, were the more humiliating to the latter, as he felt conscious that this false friend had intended to dishonour him by subverting the chastity of his wife. He was, therefore, so overcome with vexation, that he was about to leave the supper-room, just as the bailiff was ushering in the guests, who were following him in pairs. The portly director of the feast took hold of Diether's arm, as if nothing had happened between them. "My most respected friend," said he, in an audible voice, "the accident you met with has unhappily deprived us for some time of your company at our social board. As you are now come, however, to celebrate the festival of the blessed resurrection, be pleased to take your place by my side. We have often sat together in council, let us now sit together at table."

Before the elder could say a word to the contrary, the stewards conducted him to a chair,

and, exercising a polite constraint, obliged him to take his seat.

The remaining guests distributed themselves around the table according to their rank, while the young men who either came too late to find a seat, or were glad of an opportunity of displaying their gallantry, ranged themselves behind the ladies' chairs. By degrees, however, the greater part of them crowded to the lower end of the table, where a young man, very elegantly attired, was amusing all around him by his easy and agreeable humour. This was no other than Dagobert, who had joined the company after they had seated themselves, and taken his place behind the chair of Madame von Dürningen, a noble lady from the neighbourhood of Friedberg, who was on a visit at Franckfort during the festivities. Dagobert was particularly engaged with this lady, who was a good-humoured widow in the prime of life, and her daughter an amiable and merry girl about fourteen years of age; for, except the lady's uncle, scarcely any one of the company addressed a word to these interesting strangers.

The mother pleased with Dagobert's atten-

tions, readily listened to his conversation, but he excited a still more lively interest in the bosom of the fair Regina, whose eyes were rivetted upon him with so intense an earnestness, that she seemed to have no ear but for his words, and whenever his eyes met hers, a deep blush suffused her youthful cheeks. His facetiousness and wit interested Regina so deeply, and he paid her such flattering compliments, that the mother at length said in a tone of gentle rebuke, "pray be a little more moderate in your flattery, young gentleman, you will make the girl vain."

"And why should she not be vain?" asked Dagobert, with an air of gallantry. "Did she not, at her baptism, obtain the privilege of holding dominion over all young bachelors? And if this youthful queen (for Regina means nothing less) is destined to maintain that dominion by the surpassing loveliness of her person, and the fascination of her manners, why should she not rule over my heart also, which is one of the most susceptible that ever panted to win a fair lady's smiles?"

Madame von Dürningen's uncle, who was a lean, stiff patrician, and had a morbid anti-

pathy to gaiety of every kind, here austere-ly hinted to the merry humourist, that such exaggerated compliments, which might be variously interpreted, little became that sacred profession for which he understood him to be destined.

The youth replied gravely, "I shall settle that matter, sir, with my own conscience, if you will be pleased to permit me." He then continued his complimentary addresses to Regina, and every now and then excited by his waggeries the applauses of those around him. This was exceedingly galling to the justice's son, young Schweikard, an extravagant coxcomb, who was ambitious of being considered in all companies a most superlative wag. He looked grim and was silent—hummed a tune—drew down the left corner of his mouth, and inflated his nostrils, as if in derision of his rival; for he could not bear that any one should share that applause which he considered to be exclusively his own. After looking daggers at old Diether's son, he whispered into the justice's ear, who immediately gave a nod of approbation, and then said something to the bailiff in an under-tone, by whose side he was sitting.

Many words were now exchanged in whispers between these worthies, who, at one time, directed threatening glances towards Dagobert, and at another towards his father. Diether had for some time been most unpleasantly seated at a short distance from the bailiff, who had affected to show him great attention, though the elder knew that this was only done to cover what had passed between them before supper, or as the preliminary to some grosser insult. The old man therefore sat on thorns—he had no relish for any of the luxuries so profusely displayed before him, but was at length relieved from his distressing situation by the entrance of a servant who announced to him that there was a lad in the ante-room, awaiting his presence to make some important communication. Diether instantly rose from the table, and was about to quit the room, when the master of the house abruptly entered, and addressing the old man, exclaimed aloud:—“Alas! venerable sir, you will be astonished to learn”—“What!” cried the bailiff impetuously, with a malignant forboding of evil.—“Your daughter,” continued the man, still addressing Diether, “your virtuous and accomplished daughter”—

“What of her?” asked the agitated father, “keep me not in torture.”

“The highwaymen, who infest the roads about Waesbaden, have seized her within a mile of that place, and have borne her to one of their dens. Yesterday only her servants were released. They were turned out in the night, with their eyes bound, on a cross road, a few miles hence, and not far from the mountains. The frightful intelligence has been brought by her serving-man and woman, and your disconsolate lady, sir, overcome with terror at the sad intelligence, desires your presence at home!”

“I come,” said the old man, half bewildered, calling for his cloak and hat.

The news, in the meanwhile, had circulated round the table, when Dagobert sprung up also to follow his father, who had just reached the door, when the bailiff said to the justice, loud enough to be heard by those immediately around him, “This does not at all surprise me. *I* am no stranger to the proceedings which have been going on in that house for some time past. In order to comprehend the whole affair, it is only necessary to know that the step-mother and the

brother have always persecuted the poor sister, and that the brother of the former is a notorious bushranger, an outcast from all society, both civil and religious."

These words fell on the elder's ear like a thunderbolt, and casting a look of anguish at his son, he hurried out of the house.

Dagobert, however, appearing not to notice his father's agony, went boldly up to the bailiff, and asked him sternly, "How dare you presume before God and this company to distress my father, and revile me? How dare you scandalize my exemplary stepmother, who, far from participating in the wicked practices of the Leuenberger, has ever furnished an example of virtuous conduct to the whole city?"

The important man of office measured the indignant youth, upon whom the eyes of all were now fixed, from head to foot, and curling his lip in scorn, replied, "I can well comprehend the reason of your vindicating so cavalierly the young wife of your old father; but I should like to know what right you have to call me to account? I insist upon your silence, stripling, until I may think fit to question you."

"Speak out boldly—what have you to say?"

rejoined Dagobert, whose indignation now waxed fiercer, at the recollection of the bailiff's meditated villany towards Esther, "speak man—I do not fear thee; I have already observed thy base hostility towards me. Thou art bold when backed by thy friends; but I will beard thee in the midst of them. I shall, probably, now learn from your courtesy the reason why you view me with so much unmanly jealousy. I do not say, 'Tell it not in Gath,' but bid thee proclaim it aloud; yet I advise thee at the same time, to abstain from uttering a calumny either against my father or his wife."

Several of his friends here whispered to him to be temperate, and Madame Von Dürningen urged him, by a friendly nod, to be silent.

"You have already forgotten yourself," said the bailiff, affecting calmness, "yet it shall not be said that I wish to punish a youth whom excess of wine has rendered forgetful of the respect which he owes to this company, at least, if not to me; as a gentleman, I pardon your rudeness to myself, but, as director of this honorable assembly, I have a word to say to you, which would have been communicated

sooner, had I not wished to spare your father's feelings. For what purpose, are eight sureties required by our regulations before a candidate can be admitted into our society? That no member may violate the laws of decency and social order. Whoever acts in a manner unbecoming the birth and education of a gentleman, is decreed by our regulations to be expelled from this house, and with such expulsion I now visit you."

"Do you address this language to me?" exclaimed Dagobert fearlessly, while all around were silent.

"To you," replied the bailiff, assuming an air of lofty importance, and strutting up to the ex-deacon like an old peacock,—“after the occurrences of yesterday, can you think that you are a fit person to appear in this select assembly? The man, who associates with Jews, murderers, and robbers—who takes the degraded daughter of an atrocious criminal under his protection, in defiance of the police—who threatens a judge in the execution of his high office, and is not ashamed of laying his hand upon the common hangman in the public street in defence of a vile outcast—such a man is no

longer fit for the society of gentlemen. There is the door—depart!”

“In the name of all the saints! what has happened?” exclaimed some of the company, when a detail of the occurrences of the preceding day, exaggerated by the chief justice, his son, and the bailiff’s nephew, was repeated round the room. Many of those who were nearest to Dagobert withdrew some paces from him, when they heard that he was charged with holding communication with Jews, with touching the hangman, whose hands had been probably also laid upon him. The last words, however, uttered by the bailiff, instead of exciting Dagobert’s anger, as some wished, and others dreaded, had quite a contrary effect. “I thought, hitherto,” said he, looking calmly around him, “that I had been among feeling men; I perceive, however, that I have been mistaken. There is probably not a man among you who would not readily spend his money to restore a spavined horse, nor a lady whose heart would not be torn with anguish upon seeing her lap-dog in danger. Yet you pronounce a harsh judgment against me, because I took the part of persons most worthy of compassion—because

I averted a cruelty which, far from being justified by the laws, was a positive violation of them, as arising from an odious spirit of persecution. I never, indeed, supposed that Jews were less than dogs and horses, and I can think it no disgrace to be expelled from a society who hold, saving your presence, ladies and gentlemen, such a truly damnable doctrine. I go with pleasure from among you, without rancour towards any one; for I will not even tell this respectable assembly what has passed between their worthy director, the most honourable bailiff here present, and the equally honourable Jewish physician." He then left the room with an undaunted step, like an enemy who was still to be dreaded, even in retreat.

Dagobert's departure was the signal for a general dispute. Many, who were friends of Frosch's family, reproached the director with his severe treatment of the son of a respectable elder. They spoke of Diether's numerous connections, who would feel incensed by this conduct towards his heir, and probably demand satisfaction for the insult offered him.

"Let them attempt what they please," exclaimed the bailiff; "I have done my duty,

and, both as bailiff elsewhere and as master of the ceremonies here, I will maintain my privilege."

"There are still prisons for rebellious subjects," said the justice.

"What is there to dread?" asked the bailiff's nephew, laughing. "Dagobert's conduct at the council is known to the whole town. His reputation is gone.

"The libertine will not even fulfil his mother's vow, and become a priest!" said Madame von Dürningen's uncle.

"It is well for us," exclaimed young Schweikard, "that this jack-pudding dare not show himself again in good society." To which the bailiff added, with a significant obliquity of look, "There are some very strange circumstances connected with the Frosch family, which will most probably soon come before the world."

The friends of the calumniated Froschs now rose from the table in anger, and retorted upon the defamers their own vile calumnies. Thus the harmony and good fellowship of the evening were converted into discord and enmity.

Dagobert returned to his father's house, with

a quiet conscience and an utter contempt for his enemies. Vollbrecht opened the door.

"Where is my father?"

"Gone to the town-major, to give him an account of the robbery," was the reply.

"Good," rejoined Dagobert, "but where are my sister's servants?"

Vollbrecht informed him "that they were secured in the upper apartment, as Madame Diether was of opinion that they might have put the poor young lady to death, or have sold her to the robbers."

"Certainly, it is possible," replied Dagobert. "I will speak to them to-morrow. Give me a light."

Dagobert went up stairs, and as he passed by Margaret's chamber, her door opened gently, when she said in a low voice, "Dagobert, is that you?"

"It is, dear madam! May God protect you, and grant you a good night's rest."

"Stay!" said Margaret, softly; and beckoning with her white hand, "let me avail myself of this favourable moment; step in to me."

Dagobert started at this request, recollecting

her former attachment towards him, and paused at the threshold.

"Nay! shun me not," exclaimed the importunate step-mother. "Only listen to me for a moment, my dear son!"

This appeal was made in a tone so affecting, that Dagobert could no longer resist, and he entered the chamber. Margaret received him by a faint glimmering light, from a covered lamp, in her close night-gown. His heart beat, and his hand trembled, when she took hold of it; but drawing aside the shade from the lamp, and perceiving her eyes to be filled with tears, and that her countenance, far from expressing any unlawful desire, exhibited only intense sorrow, he felt more tranquil.

"What are your commands, dear madam?" asked Dagobert, mildly. "Name them, and I am ready to obey you."

"I am wretched," cried Margaret, sinking into a chair, while big drops of anguish rolled down her cheeks. "If I am a weak, I am at least an innocent woman, and ought not to be so severely visited for the trifling offences which I may have committed."

"The evil intention is as morally criminal as

the evil action, and frequently brings with it as severe a punishment," said Dagobert; but immediately reflecting that his words might increase Margaret's unhappiness, he kindly continued, "Speak your wishes, dear lady, and if within the compass of my means, they shall be fulfilled."

"Your father," she replied, in broken accents; "has this evening treated me with the greatest inhumanity. His soul is filled with rage and suspicion. He imagines that my brother has entrapped Wallrade, and that I have been the promoter of the mischief. I can boldly declare my innocence in the presence of the eternal God, but Diether believes me not. How am I to convince him? Tell me; you cannot refuse me your advice and assistance, since you are also a suspected party. He thinks he can perceive a criminal understanding between yourself and me."

"This is confidence in his wife and son, with a vengeance!" said Dagobert, indignantly. "Is it possible that he can think us capable of forming a league so infernal—of selling a human being, and a relation too, to robbers? He is, indeed, very much changed! The frost

of age has nipped all his kindlier feelings. You are right, however—you are indeed an injured woman. But we must repel these undeserved indignities. He who will not believe, must be brought to a sense of his own errors. I will yet convince him of our innocence, and put him to shame for his unjust suspicions; and in order to rescue both your good name and mine from opprobrium, I will, to-morrow, set out upon a journey of discovery, and traverse the world until I have discovered the perpetrators of this villanous outrage.”

Margaret, whose hopes began now to revive, pressed his hand. “Good Dagobert, you do indeed deserve my gratitude, but I have yet more to communicate; which, when you hear, you will have greater cause to compassionate my situation, and still less reason to condemn me.”

“I can have no reason to suppose, my dear madam,” rejoined Dagobert, “that I shall ever hear from your lips any thing that can lower you in my estimation. On the contrary, I feel satisfied that you have never been guilty of an action that can dishonour you—but this brings suddenly to my recollection a com-

mission, which I must deliver to you before I proceed in search of our lost Wallrade. Ben David, the poor Jew, who, with his aged father, pines in prison, charged with unheard-of crimes, appeals to you in his distress.”—Margaret turned pale.—“He desires you may be informed that his situation is critical, and that you will not, therefore, lose a moment in coming to his relief. He is threatened with the rack, which he fears he should not survive. As you alone are capable of rendering him effectual assistance, he implores your immediate exertions in his favour, and you will thus ensure his everlasting gratitude.”

“Alas!” exclaimed Margaret, with bitter anguish; “this crowns my misery. How can I save him, without committing myself?”

“Calm your agitation,” said Dagobert.—“Rely upon me. I will protect you from any unjust suspicion. Do what you can for the poor man, and fear no evil consequences. A good action cannot have a bad issue!—Though a Jew, he is worthy of your sympathy:—Turn not, then, a deaf ear to his prayer. The elders will sit in judgment upon the miserable man, whose only request is, that you will use your influence with your husband in his

behalf. Should my father refuse to listen to your appeal, you will at least have the satisfaction of thinking, that you have performed a duty towards a fellow-creature, and thus secure a quiet conscience."

"A quiet conscience!" echoed Margaret, despairingly. "In truth, I have no alternative. I *must* save the Jew, or be involved in the same ruin with him! Dagobert!—noble Dagobert! towards whom my heart yearns with a tenderness which no words can measure—to you I turn for support under the load of misery which now oppresses me. Save the Jew, or I am lost! My fate is involved in his! All my hopes will be crushed in his condemnation, and with them those of the child now slumbering in that chamber!"

"What can you mean, dear lady?" exclaimed Dagobert. "How can the Jew's fate affect our dear Johannes?"

"Alas! it is but too true!" said Margaret, sobbing. "You are now my only stay! I commend my own fate, and that of the boy, to Heaven and to you! This child—has no father—Dagobert, be a parent to him!"

Dagobert started back in astonishment—and Margaret sank at his feet.

Diether entered the room at this moment; when Dagobert, having raised his stepmother from the ground, and placed her on a chair, approached the elder. "Dear father!" said he, "your arrival is most seasonable: your wife's nerves have been so cruelly shattered by your unjust suspicions, that her reason bids fair to give way under the shock. Revoke your unkind criminations, and restore her to that favour which she has never justly forfeited. I am grieved to find, that you also mistrust me. But in order to convince you that, as far as I am concerned, your suspicions are equally unfounded, I quit you with the dawn in search of Wallrade, and without her I shall never return."

Diether stood for some moments in silence, with his eyes fixed upon the ground. At length he said, doggedly, "I shall always know how to preserve the honour of my house. What you do I care not, so long as you quit my sight. This house shall be no longer the abode of a degenerate son."

Dagobert looked at the old man earnestly, but did not reply. He then bowed to Margaret and the elder, and retired.

Diether raised his clasped hands towards heaven, whilst his countenance quivered with agitation. "Have I deserved this? They who were as blossoms in my path, have turned to asps under my feet, and stung me to the soul. I feel the poison now through every pore. There is a curse," said he, turning to Margaret, "that will imbitter my future days. My son is like one of the serpent brood which crawls into the parent's bosom and gnaws his very vitals. I have but one purpose to fulfil—one course to pursue. Wife, we must separate for ever. The world is wide enough for both. Go where you will, but never cross the footsteps of a wronged and degraded husband. In order that you may not be exposed to the unfeeling taunts of those who are ever ready to heap them upon the guilty, you may remain here until a favourable opportunity offers for your departure, but I must insist that you do not leave your room, as I am resolved never to behold you more."

He now quitted the chamber, and left the unhappy Margaret overcome by consternation and despair.

CHAPTER V.

VEIT, the Leuenberger, was sitting upon a jutty in the castle at Gelnhausen, whence he could look over the surrounding country. Petronella, his aunt, was hobbling about in an adjoining apartment, which served at once for kitchen, sitting-room, and dormitory, and every now and then casting the only eye she possessed towards her nephew, through the dilapidated door-way, who was busily engaged in fitting a new hood to his falcon. The bird was very impatient under the process, but his master was still more so; having, however, at length fixed the hood upon the hawk's head, he took him within doors, and placed him upon his perch.

As Veit was proceeding again to the jutty, with his hand behind his back, and whistling the tune of an old drinking-song, his aunt, to

whom scolding was at once a vocation and a delight, hissed from between two stunted fangs like an enraged goose upon her eggs, "God grant me patience," said she, "how lazy the carle has become. Is he whistling for his dinner? Does he expect to be fed by the ravens?"

"Did you speak, aunt?" asked the Leuenberger.

"I have been speaking some time, dolt," replied Petronella, snatching up the bellows, "but of what use is it? The Lord may cover the roads with booty, but what are we the better? you never bring home any thing that pays for the labour of taking. A pretty fellow you for a member of an honourable profession, to omit attacking the Nurnberg wine-merchant and securing his casks. Fie on thee for a poor puling cutpurse! Thy old aunt could better cry stand to a true liegeman on the emperor's highway, but she, poor soul, is allowed to parch in her old age, when a draught of good Rhenish now and then would impart elasticity to her joints and cheerfulness to her heart."

"Rhenish, say you?" retorted Veit; "'tis a villanous bad potation, it inflames the blood

and makes old women crusty. Drink water, that will make your head strong and your eyes clear. By my troth, you need the latter, for your only eye is as dull as your wits, nor is your nose a whit the better, since you neither see nor smell that the lentils are at this moment burning in the pan."

"A plague upon thee for an idle hound!" exclaimed the aunt, as she snatched the pan from the fire, "I must have my eyes every where, forsooth, because you will concern yourself about nothing. Come, Veit, come," continued she, softening, "sit down to table my good lad."

She then wiped the greasy table with her sleeve, and throwing a coloured apron over it, placed the unsavoury dish hissing from the fire, upon this unbleached coverlet. Plates were a luxury never dreamt of at Gelnhausen, while the rusty knives and forks furnished no very exalted idea of the domestic economy of its most honourable inmates. Veit sat down at table, and upon his aunt sticking her fork into a small piece of oily sausage, which she shared with her nephew, he laughed heartily and said,

at the same time cutting a crust of coarse rye bread—

“ A fine piece of roast this, with a vengeance, for Easter week ! By the sin of our first ancestor, if this sort of life is to continue much longer, I shall hang myself up on the first convenient beam, as a warning to all poor devils against surfeiting upon lentils. Sausage meat is sorry feeding for a gentleman.”

“ You are always quarrelling with your bread instead of getting butter to spread upon it,” said the old woman, laying hold of the dish with both hands ; “ the roads are open to you, why do you not keep a good look out, as others do ? ”

“ Why am I a poorer wretch than others ? ” asked Veit, with a sneer. “ Because I have an old one-eyed aunt to feed—who never gave God nor me thanks, but eats her porridge at my expense, and gives me base words for my goodwill. Eppsteiner, the Kasebergers, and all the rest of our merry devils upon the road, have excellent horses and plenty of money to pay their scouts, while I can scarcely get from home to Franckfort without my jade break-

ing down and snorting like a stranded porpoise.

The rogues, too, look upon me as no better than a wandering Jew, because I cannot apply a silver plaster to cure the itching of their palms. I have braved wind and weather, but what am I the better? I understand my profession as well as the best man that ever entered it, still, whether out or in, poverty lugs at my elbow or dogs me at the heels, and my bowels are griped with lean provender, whilst others are wallowing in luxury, that never dared win a purse at odds."

"You are an obstinate dissatisfied varlet, and a lazy whelp into the bargain," rejoined the aunt; "only look at our neighbours! Look at Jost, who is housed just under our window—with a house full of children, a sick wife, and a lame father, and nothing but his gray horse, saddle and stirrups. Think, too, of Herne von Niedlinger, who inhabits the other wing. He has a room like a stable, a blind wife, and more children than Jost, with no gray horse, saddle, or stirrups. He is obliged to beg or plunder to feed their hungry mouths, which are eternally cawing for a meal. How much happier are you! a single man, whose domestic concerns

are managed by a careful and prudent aunt! I would stake my porringer against a cracked trencher, that your degenerate sister, though rolling in wealth, has more troubles than you have."

"It is possible," replied Veit; "I would willingly, however, exchange conditions with her. Just look at my doublet, aunt? 'tis more than threadbare. I'm out at elbows too—what gentleman ever showed his bare elbow to the wind except the poor lord of Gelnhausen?"

"Hand me my needle," said the aunt. There, goose, where are your eyes? Can't you see the bed? 'tis stuck in the corner of the coverlet—bring it that I may darn thy rags. 'Tis time thou shouldst be decent, for the cat has been scratching her ears, and I have had a most ominous itching on the forehead, which forebodes us a visit this very day."

"Pray Heaven that it may do us some service, and that it be not a visit from young Von Hagen, to whom I lost three silver florins last week, at draughts; nor from the farmer, whose hay-rick I plundered eight days ago, and still less from Nathan, the Jew, from whom I borrowed a pound weight of copper money, to

be paid with interest on Maunday-Thursday, which is hard at hand."

"Psha!" said Petronella, "you are not craven enough to fear a whelp and two toothless curs. Tickle Von Hagen with fair speeches, damn the farmer for an impertinent knave, and as for the Hebrew, fling him over the battlements. Their worships of the criminal court will never molest thee for breaking the neck of a Jew. Be easy, boy, I have now an itching in the sinister palm, which is a sure token either of money or of better fortune."

"I hope you have got the itch to a good purpose," exclaimed Veit incredulously as he walked to the grindstone, in a corner of the room, to sharpen his dagger and hunting-knife. "If I were an emperor, I would take Franckfort by storm, cut the throats of all the rich citizens, and distribute their stores among the poor cavaliers."

"Thou art still no better than a fool," said the aunt with a grin of approbation, "though thou hast lived long enough to be wiser. I would say something to thee if thou wouldst only procure for thy poor old relative a few comforts to gladden her latter days."

"No doubt on't," rejoined Veit. "If it depended upon a handful of steel we should soon be richer than old Frosch. The bungling block-head, who merely pricked the old man's skin instead of letting out his heart's blood, ought to forswear plunder for ever. Curse on him for an awkward cutthroat!"—At this moment Jost's eldest boy came tumbling over the cockle-stairs, and bawled out, "Noble neighbour! my father bids me tell you to put on your best boots and doublet, and brush your cap, for the gentleman of Hornberg is just arrived in his own carriage and horses, and will soon be with you."

"Did I not say so," exclaimed the beldame merrily. "The cat is a true prophet, and deserves to be canonized!"

"The Hornberger is as poor as myself," said Veit sulkily, as he flung his heavy wooden shoes into the corner, put on his darned doublet and boots, and blew a cloud of dust from his forage cap. "The Hornberger is as dry as an unwet sponge—he can suck in as much too, but trust him for suffering himself to be squeezed. He wears finer clothes to be sure, and rides a better horse, but"—

"And does his business with the sword's

point, like a true man; that's more than thou canst say," retorted Petronella, as she threw under the hearth whatever she did not wish should meet her guest's eyes. "The good gentleman has often made thee a sharer in his plunder, when thou wert little deserving on't; and mark my words, he is come to-day with no other view."

The old woman had scarcely finished her rebuke, when a heavy footstep, and the loud sniffing of a dog, announced the visiter's approach, and after a few moments, both master and dog, animals alike ill-favoured, entered the apartment.

"Good day!" said the former, grasping Veit's hand, and at the same time giving the hobbling hostess a heavy thump between the shoulders, which made a tear start into the only eye of the female Cyclops. He now broke out into a hoarse laugh as his bull-dog, observing the old woman's cat, took a sudden spring towards the hearth upon which puss was reposing, upsetting both table and stool, and scattering all the best crockery, which had been displayed on this occasion, in innumerable

fragments upon the floor. The dog then set up a dreadful howl, as grimalkin darted up the wall and secured herself upon the top of a high dresser.

"My Packan is one of the right breed, and has a mortal antipathy to cats as well as his master," said the Hornberger, sticking his hands into his sides, and looking significantly at the withered Petronella. "He has not his equal in all Germany. I love him as a brother, and should have no shame in claiming kindred with so bold a brute. Never mind your crockery mistress. Let the pots go to the devil. I'll pay for them." So saying, he threw a handful of silver upon the table, at the same time clinking other money, which sounded like gold, in his pocket.

The aunt courtesied her acknowledgment, while the nephew said, with an equivocal laugh, "You scatter your silver as if you had the plundering of the imperial exchequer."

"Brother!" exclaimed Hornberg, "it is a catch not to be met with every day. I bring you tidings of a feast which has lasted fourteen days."

"A feast?" asked Veit, anxiously.

"Of fourteen days!" repeated the aunt, who seemed animated with the joyful expectation that the period for good-living had at length arrived.

"Just so," rejoined the Hornberger, "I have ridden like a hunted thief, and before the clock strikes two, we must be spurring onward. Honest old Bechtram von Bilbel sends you both a pressing invitation to become his guests."

"Bechtram von Bilbel?" exclaimed Petronella, in astonishment.—"What motive can the avaricious old fox have for inviting us?" added Veit, incredulously. "Since he ceased to be field-captain of the Franckfort lancers, he has never troubled himself about me, although he taught me to fight; and still less has he concerned himself about my aunt. What, then, am I to understand by this invitation?"

"That it is an honest one, and not to be declined," replied the Hornberger; "but your *fair* relative," added he, with a sly leer at Veit, "must put herself in better trim; she cannot accompany us in her kitchen costume."

"Nay, but—" rejoined the crone, tripping about in perplexity—"if I were only certain—are you really in earnest, now?—and how am I to proceed without horse or mule?"

"I have taken care of that," continued the Hornberger. "Come, doff your rags, and while you are putting on your state attire, I will satisfy your curiosity."

"Do so, in the name of Heaven, and quickly!" croaked the hoary spinster, "I will be hooded ere you shall have drained your flask of Tunkelhans."

She then searched her pockets for the key of the house-chest, which was rarely in requisition, and hobbled into a corner of the room, where the Leuenberger's ragged riding-coat was hanging upon a string stretched across the apartment, and over which was thrown a large coarse rug, to serve as a partition, and behind this was Petronella's bed, and scanty wardrobe, both of which had been carefully kept from the visitor's view.

The Hornberger placed himself in the mean while upon the chaff-sack, which was covered with calf's hide, and formed Veit's bed; then scratching his bull-dog's ears, began to relate his story, to which both aunt and nephew attentively listened.

"I took a ride over the country," said he, "in the holy week, because I had neither wood

in my yard, nor wine in my cellar. Wishing to pay a visit to the Reiffensteiner, I proceeded to his snug abode, but he was from home; and as he was gone into Franconia, his wife appeared to have no inclination to let me await his return. I therefore buckled the girth tighter under my trusty steed, and made the best of my way towards Neufalkenstein, where I had learnt I should meet the Eppsteiner. Old Bechtram is certainly not a liberal man, but his housewife, Madame Else, will not suffer a brave cavalier to want any thing, whenever he may please to spend the holy days in her husband's house. Preparations for the festival have been duly made. Else has finished her labours at the kneading-trough, and the lads out of doors have killed a couple of fat bucks, the sight of which set all my internals in commotion. It was about nine o'clock in the morning, when the cavalier was sitting with the Eppsteiner and Wernher von Hyrzenhorn over a flask of Rhenish, and a dish of fish soaked in vinegar. These gentlemen received me very kindly, and made me many complimentary speeches.—The glass went merrily round till tall Wernher's head became heavy, and he fell asleep."

“ Bechtram now said to me, ‘ You could not have arrived more opportunely. The Eppsteiner, and I have something in contemplation—we shall require your assistance.’ ”

“ I was ready for any thing, but was somewhat surprised that they had not engaged Hyrzenhorn, who is a very dragon at a highway adventure. The Eppsteiner looked grave, and Bechtram said, ‘ The devil take all Franckfort people, and the cowards who hold with them,’ meaning to cast a stigma upon Hyrzenhorn, who was attached to the town. Bechtram then took me aside, and said, ‘ Are you willing to pass your Easter in my house, and to earn a good round sum ? If so, mount your horse to-morrow with me, and ride towards Wiesbaden. A man of rank has commissioned me to capture a certain young lady, who intends proceeding from Franckfort towards the forest of Thüringen, and promises me all her jewels and money, together with an ample reward, and an advance for baiting-money. Kunz Doring, my good comrade, who has kept his eye upon the fair prize at Franckfort for more than a week, informed me yesterday that she has suddenly resolved upon proceeding to Wiesbaden, but only for a day or

so, as he learned from her gossiping servants. I have determined, therefore, to secure her as she returns from Wiesbaden, but require assistance in case she should travel with an escort.' I, of course, agreed to the proposal without hesitation, and on the Good-Friday we were already stationed on the road between Wiesbaden and Franckfort, because on that day our good lady was to return to the town. Friday, however, being an inauspicious day, and Good-Friday especially, her return was deferred until the Saturday.

"The sun had just risen when the carriage came in sight. We immediately attacked it; though I did the business alone, for I knocked the boy from his horse, cut the traces, threw the serving-wench into the mud, gagged the mistress, who struggled more like a man than a maid, tied her upon a saddle horse, then dashed off with her—and a good-looking lass she was too—over hedges and ditches towards Neufalkenstein, while Doring went in pursuit of a young peasant, who had been sitting behind the carriage, and had made off on the first attack, towards Wiesbaden. In the mean time Bechtram took possession of the captive's pro-

perty, while his groom gagged and secured her servants. The speed at which I pushed forward, proved too much for the poor damsel, who nearly gave up the ghost on the saddle. At first, I thought she was playing some of her woman's tricks upon me, and I therefore only laughed at her, for our employer had stipulated that she should not be spared. When, however, her head dropped upon my shoulder, and she became pale as a dead man's brow, I took compassion upon her, loosened the gag from her mouth, first threatening to strangle her if she cried out, and allowed her to take breath by the side of a lonely wood. I even offered her a bit of bread and garlick which I carried with me in my saddle-bag. She refused the refreshment, but conducted herself so peaceably that I made the journey as easy as possible to her. About dusk we arrived at our destination, where the whole assailing party was assembled. On the following morning we released the servants, but retained the mistress.

"What, in the name of Heaven!" exclaimed Veit, who was now ready equipped for his journey, "have we to do with this long history?" I am no stranger to such adventures.

"What have you to do with this history?" echoed the Hornberger, laughing. "Much, comrade, since you will be indebted to it for an introduction to a fair niece, Bechtram's captive being no other than the daughter-in-law of your sister Margaret."

"What, Wallrade?" screamed the aunt, while Veit gave the Hornberger a smile of incredulity.

"As true as I have kept Easter like a good Catholic," rejoined the Hornberger, "our captive is Miss von Baldergrün. She has shown a wise discretion, too, by keeping a peaceable tongue in her head. She behaves with as much outward indifference as if she were a knight, to whom the fortune of war had proved unfavourable. Though, however, all is calm without, she seems to be all storm within. Bechtram and Else have therefore resolved upon inviting you to console her, in order that she may not sicken and die before the capture-money has been paid."

"I doubt if she will be cheered by our visit," rejoined Veit; "but if she will not, I shall for it will be a treat to me to behold that haughty spinster in her humiliation."

"Ay boy," added Petronella, "so say I. I shall rejoice at the opportunity of saluting the vain coquette, who considered it a disgrace that the Leuenberg arms should be introduced into her father's family."

"Come," said the Hornberger, "we must away before twelve; and, even if the wheels and horses' hoofs should strike fire all the way, it will be a tough matter to reach Neufalkenstein before midnight. The carriage waits. I had half determined to take your aunt before me, like a gallant cavalier, when a peasant, as if he had been summoned, overtook me on my way hither. He was going towards Franckfort and Hockst, with a small vehicle full of the best straw, whereon sat a monk, as dirty, indeed, but not so fat, as monks generally are. I made the carle halt, ordered him to turn round and wait for a fresh load. The dog made a show of resistance. I then pierced the tendon of the hind leg of one of his horses, and threatened to serve the other in the same way if he continued disobedient. This lesson served to stop his further opposition, he accordingly turned and followed me. I wished to cashier the priest, who was proceeding to Franckfort. The poor wretch

however, showed me his blistered feet, and I then suffered him to remain, because I make it a matter of conscience to be charitable towards father confessors, who do us a service sometimes by giving us a lift to heaven. I have locked the peasant, the monk, and the carriage, in the stable below, and left my servant there to watch that the varlets do not escape. I make you a present, Veit, of the lame horse, and we will procure the peasant another on the road."

Petronella assured the Hornberger that she felt a double pleasure in undertaking the journey, since she should be accompanied by one of the Lord's anointed. She now hung the forgotten rosary on her arm, and the copper cross around her neck, and then declared herself ready to proceed.

Veit took the falcon from its perch, and casting an anxious look around the chamber, said, "Have you shut the chest, aunt, and taken care of the iron utensils, which I lately brought home?"

"Every thing is safe," replied Petronella, as she sprinkled the four corners of the room with incense. "Heaven will guard our quiet retreat during our absence!" So saying, she closed

the door, and, loaded with her cat and bundle, hobbled after the men.

Veit, in the interval, had charged his neighbour, Jost, with the superintendence of his dwelling, and borrowed a saddle from him—an article which Jost could well dispense with, as his horse had lately given up the ghost.

The Leuenberger's steed was now saddled; Petronella was lifted upon the carriage by the side of the monk; the horsemen then mounted, and the Hornberger's servant waiting behind, they set off from Gelnhausen. The doors and windows of the surrounding dwellings were crowded by their noble occupants, to witness the departure of the travellers. The poor driver cast a sorrowful look at his wounded horse, which was left in a strange stable, and which he had now beheld for the last time. Then turning his head aside, he gave a deep sigh—smacked his whip—the bull-dog barked, and away they went, as merry as pleasant expectations could make them.

CHAPTER VI

THE doors of the dungeon in which the Hebrew father and son were confined were thrown open, and the wretched prisoners removed into a light room.

"What are we to do here?" inquired Ben David, as the gaoler was relieving him from his fetters.

"To whom are we indebted for the favour of being again together?" added Joachim, rubbing his wrists, which were benumbed by the irons from which he had just been released.

"You will soon know," replied the surly keeper. "You will receive some visitors to-day, whom we could not introduce into your dungeon."

A long pause ensued, during which the pri-

soners viewed each other with the most painful anxiety.

"Are we permitted to speak to one another?" asked Joachim.

"In the name of Heaven, do so!" replied the gaoler: "it is a matter of perfect indifference; for whether you confess or not, you will certainly be condemned to the stake."

The prisoners shuddered. Ben David, however, was the first to recover his self-possession; when, approaching his father, he anxiously inquired how he felt.

"Ask the willow which is dying on the waste," replied Joachim, in anguish. "The lamp is already flickering in the socket, and my soul trembles at the approach of death. Alas! my son, your obstinacy will destroy the life of him who was the author of yours."

Ben David wiped the perspiration from his brow, and said, after a pause, "Nearly a week has elapsed since we have received any intelligence of Esther."

"The keeper brought me wine twice," observed Joachim, "and certainly I must be indebted for this to her love alone."

Ben David now turned towards the gaoler.

" Good Christian," said he, " can you tell me nothing of my child ?—Comes she not daily to the door, as usual, to inquire after her father, and venerable grandsire ?"

" What should I know about her," replied the man, gruffly; " I should have enough to do, if I were to pay attention to all who whine and howl about the prison gate. Nobody has asked about you, except a girl, who brought wine twice for the elder criminal."

" That girl," said Joachim, with energy, whilst tears streamed down his aged cheeks, " is Esther!—May God bless her in his paradise !"

" Pshaw !" growled the gaoler, " that girl is no more a Jewess than I am a Jew, for she wears a cross round her neck, though, Heaven knows, she is ugly enough to pass any day for one of your tribe."

" Then she is not Esther !" said Ben David, with a sigh, casting his eyes sorrowfully upon the ground.

" Did humanity ever enter the soul of a daughter of Edom ?" asked old Joachim, shaking his head.

" What is become of my child ?" continued

Ben David, taking no notice of his father's question, but leaning his throbbing temples on the narrow ledge of a window, which was secured within and without by ponderous bars.

A long ring of the gate bell now called the gaoler away, and the prisoners were left alone. Ben David and his father turned their eyes anxiously towards the door. In a few minutes the keeper returned with Zodiah. The Jews turned in disgust from the hardened apostate, whose features were marked with a mixed expression of ferocity and hypocritical sympathy. The keeper, upon receiving a wink from Zodiah, withdrew.

"Ben David and Joachim," said the Christian convert, advancing slowly towards them, "may I be permitted to speak a word with you?"

"Oh that your mother had cast you dumb from her womb!" said Joachim, with an expression of deep anguish, which he could not controul, while Ben David preserved a gloomy silence.

"The High and Holy One in heaven knows," continued Zodiah, with a hypocritical whimper "how painful it has been to me to appear as

the instrument of his retribution. The will, however, of the most merciful, but angry, Lord be done!"

"BlaspHEME not his sacred name," said Ben David—"you, who have shut your soul out from his mercy by that atrocious falsehood which has sealed our death-warrant. May the reflection embitter your future years, that by your perjury you will have delivered us into the hands of the executioner."

"First prove that I have violated the truth," replied ZodiaH, "before you charge me with falsehood."

Ben David pointed calmly towards heaven.

"My oath," continued ZodiaH, in a tone of ridicule, "would at any time be more respected than your's; because I swear by that which can alone render an oath valid in Franckfort. This will make black white." He here pointed to the cross on his doublet, when Joachim, losing all self-controul, would have struck the impious renegade, had not his son restrained him. "What are you doing, father?" exclaimed Ben David, to the incensed old man, while ZodiaH grinned at him in bitter mockery. "Let him do it," said the tormenter, "let him

do it, Ben David; there will be another charge against him for profaning the cross. But you have enough to answer for without adding to your abominable crimes. The neck-chain found in your cellar has told a horrible tale. The investigations made by the Jewish authorities at Worms have furnished the most satisfactory evidence that you, Ben David, purchased the boy, whom you so savagely murdered in that city. The person to whom you sold him is well known. You have no chance of escape—you will burn in this world as well as the next. My heart bleeds for you as a Christian and a man; but the God, whom I have now acknowledged, will not that a Christian sinner should die eternally, although the law on earth condemn him to temporal death. You had better, therefore, forswear the creed of your forefathers, and then you may have some chance in the next world.

The prisoners cast upon the miserable scoffer a look of contemptuous pity.

“Ascribe it to the compassion which I feel for you,” he continued, “that I now appear before you as a messenger of mercy. The means of salvation are still within your power.

Many a Jew has purchased his escape from the pile and the halter by availing himself of them. Declare where you have deposited your wealth, for little has been found upon your premises."

Ben David here made his father a sign to be silent, and then replied to Zodiah: "Both the lawyers and yourself are now greedy after my gold; but be assured, that neither shall the most cruel torments induce me to acknowledge a crime which I have never committed, nor your tongue influence me to point out the spot where I have deposited my wealth. 'It is health to my flesh and marrow to my bones,' as the wise proverb teacheth. I will, however, enrich thee, if thou wilt furnish me with information concerning the greatest treasure I possess, my Esther. Has she, too, fallen into the snares of Amalek, through your treachery? Are her tender limbs, too, threatened with torture? Poor child! She came innocent into the world, and innocent will go out of it. Inform me of my daughter's fate, and I will forbear to invoke the anger of a mighty and jealous God upon your head."

"The maiden," replied the savage, "is in-

volved in her parent's guilt. She will be consigned to the flames."

"Lord in Israel, hold me up!" exclaimed Joachim, with a groan; while Ben David, almost choaked with agony, seized Zodia's hand.

"May I grow crooked!" exclaimed the monster, "if it be not true. Esther has already had a love affair with a Christian youth; and the rash stripling, who so lately defended you and your daughter, in defiance of the laws, has taken her out of town, and keeps her concealed somewhere for his own amusement; but she must, nevertheless, be given up to the punishment she so justly merits."

"Oh, ye everlasting Elohim!" exclaimed Joachim. "Has the foul serpent, then, covered with infamy a daughter of Sion? My son! my son! how will you stand before the Eternal Judge, and the throne of his Messiah, when your rash obstinacy has brought such shame upon Israel?"

Ben David here interrupted his father, while his voice trembled with emotion. "Do I not suffer as much as you, and do I fear less? Have I

not loved and honoured you as a dutiful son? Is it not natural, then, that you should partake in my distress? We have contributed to each other's gains, we have shared in each other's sorrows, we have participated in each other's pleasures, why then should we not also in each others sufferings? We are here not in consequence of the errors which I have committed, but of the falsehoods which have been uttered against us; and the High God, whose glory shines above us in the boundless firmament, and imparts a divine efficacy to the points of your fingers whenever they confer upon me the paternal benediction, will not suffer us to perish by the hands of the 'enemy and the avenger,' whose 'mouth is full of cursing, and deceit, and fraud.' Horrible would it be, were Esther really entangled in the snares of voluptuousness with a son of Edom; but it is written in the books of our fathers, 'When a man has once lied to you, and borne false witness against you, believe him not a second time, nor a third time—nay, should he assert the same thing a hundred times, I say unto thee believe him not, for his tongue is an evil member, which shall bear true witness against himself at the general resurrection.' ”

Zodiah laughed aloud, "I tell you nothing but the truth, which you will find to your daughter's cost.—Esther and young Frosch will as surely end their days on the pile, as you will shortly be food for faggots. Their retreat has not yet been discovered, but it shall not escape my vigilance, since the Lord has appointed me his vicegerent to root out the wicked from among his heritage. The day, however, in which your reckoning in this world is to be finally closed has not yet dawned. The prophet Elias, who is always hovering around you, sees with sorrow that the burthen of your sins is augmenting, and would willingly hear you expiate your guilt by a full and free confession. It is proved almost beyond a doubt, Ben David, that you aimed at old Frosch the deadly stroke which had nearly sent him into the world of spirits."

"My son, my son!" exclaimed Joachim, sobbing convulsively, "into what degradation are you sunk! Every moment brings with it a fresh charge of iniquity against you, every moment a fresh shock of agony assails your aged father. David, why this silence? Declare your innocence; if not, this tongue shall do you

that justice which you refuse to do yourself. Call in the judge, Zodia, I will tell all the truth. Go, and may the high anointed Lord forgive you the sins which you have committed against us."—The aged Jew was now so exhausted with his exertions, that he could say no more, while Ben David persisted in his silence.

"I did not speak, old man," said Zodia, malignantly, "in order to provoke your exclamations, but rather to point out to you the method of obtaining, if not your liberty and life, at least an easier death. Death at the stake is horrible, and as certain as you now live, you will render up your soul in penal flames, if you persist in concealing your property. If, on the other hand, you point out where it is concealed, and you, Ben David, will at the same time confess having attempted the life of Diether Frosch, at the instigation of his wife, the elder himself is disposed to interpose in the behalf of you both. If you act as I propose, and thus deserve the Lord's mercy, it might easily be proved that Joachim, when he crucified the child in the cellar, acted under the influence of frenzy, and his life, on account of his advanced age, might then be spared."

Saying this, Zodiah quitted the room, and the prisoners were left to reflect upon his infamous proposal. Ben David now gave his father a sufficient reason for preserving silence.

"Spare your words," said he, in the old man's ear, "they will only tend to aggravate our punishment; for there are listeners behind these walls. I perceived the villain's object, and baffled it by silence when he challenged me to confession. Hark! some one approaches. Take courage, father, I will certainly save your life, and trust my own defence to Him who saveth his people Israel, and will finally 'lead them into fat pastures, beside the waters of comfort.' "

The chief justice now entered with his accustomed air of importance, followed by a secretary, with the protocol of examination under his arm, and a writing apparatus fastened to his girdle.

"Jew Joachim, and you, his son David," said the judge, "we are glad to hear that you have wisely determined to confess what we were about to extort from you by the rack. You will act prudently in acknowledging your offences which are daily coming to light. Gerard von Hülshofen"—Ben David's cheeks became

blanched, nevertheless he stood firm—"will testify against you at our bar, and thus expiate his own error, by establishing your guilt. The property of the poor Friedberger has been acknowledged by his widow, and thus you are proved to be members of that murderous association, which perpetrates its crimes within our very walls. There are now criminals pining within our gaols, and once belonging to the Korah confederacy, who remember well that one of their chief assassins was known by the name of 'The Jew.' These men cannot identify the Hebrew murderer, because he always appeared among them in disguise. In short, time is gradually sapping the false bulwark which your hypocrisy had erected around the pillar of truth. There is still time for confession. You may yet arrest the arm of retributive justice, and obtain at least a less dreadful chastisement than will await you if you continue in obdurate silence. Delay not then to make atonement for the past by a full detail of your horrible offences. Acknowledge the crucifixion of the boy, which is the principal crime laid to your charge. When you have once admitted this, there will be no difficulty in making an

ample disclosure of all your minor delinquencies."

Joachim looked at his son, whose lips were compressed, and his whole deportment firm and determined. The old man then bowed to the judge, and said resolutely—"May my limbs be this instant paralyzed if I can truly say otherwise than that 'we are innocent.' The apostate Zodiah has only this day added to the lies which he deposed against us the day of our examination. May grass never cease to grow before his door, and may he be the last man upon the earth! I cannot confess what I know not."

"Accursed Jew," cried the judge, in a vehement rage, "thou keepest lies and confessions in the same pocket. Vacillating driveller! the few moments which thou hast passed alone with this guilty son of a guilty father have been sufficient to divert thee from an honest confession." Frederick uttered a gross falsehood, when he told you"—

Here the worthy judge stopped short, having virtually acknowledged in his rage, that he had been listening behind the wall.

Joachim, however, replied with a sarcastic

smile, "Good sir, if you have heard what has passed between your hireling and myself, my confession is superfluous."

"Enough!" continued the judge, "I see that you are hardened in iniquity. If your blood-thirsty son surpasses you in skill in executing wicked deeds, you are at least his superior in cunning to plan them. You have not, I perceive, lived a hundred years in vain. But from whatever cause this obstinacy arises;—whether from the mental aberration consequent upon advanced age, or from that forgetfulness which sometimes comes to the relief of the hoary villain, and frees his memory from the heavy burden of its crimes—be it what it may, I will nevertheless wring from you a reluctant confession."

"Make use of your power, great sir, as your just wisdom may think fit," said Joachim, in a tone of suffering humility: "Man is a weak vessel, cast upon the stormy waves of an angry ocean—so, says Rabbi Joseph, peace be to his ashes, and may Paradise receive him! Another scribe, learned in the law, has, however, said, 'The great day on the other side of the sea will balance our account, and requite, according

to its deserts, every deed that has been done between the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same.' I have never forgotten any thing of moment, though my years have been many and my sins great. I am still able to number the two hundred and forty eight commandments, as well as the three hundred and sixty-five interdictions, to which I was obliged to vow obedience when, in the thirteenth year of my life, I became Ban Mitzra, that is to say, a son of the law. I have accustomed myself to keep recorded in my recollection all the good and evil moments of my existence. Of the former, I have had but few to remember, but of the latter I have remembered many, for I am, and always have been, a poor despised Jew."

"Cease this idle prating!" said the judge, vehemently, "spare thy tears for the rack, thou hoary sinner! Once more, Wilt thou confess?"

"I beg, sir, to refer a moment," said Joachim, drying his tears with his withered fingers, "to that period when you were still unborn, your father yet a boy, and your grandfather in the prime of his years. I have survived, sir,

what the present generation relate with a smile, only because the sufferers were Jews. I was a man of forty years of age, when his majesty, Charles the Fourth, had held the imperial sceptre exactly three years. We then reckoned the 5109th year of the world, an awful year to us; for within its revolution a general slaughter of the Jews began, because they were reported to have poisoned the wells, bewitched the cattle, and occasioned that great scourge, the Plague. I remember the time, as if it were but yesterday, when the massacre commenced in this very city—when Geisler entered with colours and torches, and numerous pictures of the crucified Man.”

“Our Saviour, Jew!” said the judge, correcting him, but, at the same time, allowing him to proceed, notwithstanding the impatient looks of the secretary.

“The people sang through the streets,” continued Joachim, “whilst the havoc was going on, and the dust upon the pavement was saturated with blood. A fire, occasioned either by negligence or the act of an incendiary, broke out in our quarter. I was just about to proceed into the country to bring home my wife,

who had been on a visit to her relations on the other side of the Rhine. I was standing in my mother's room when the bells began to chime, followed by a violent tumult. The poor woman, blind with age, and the hardships which she had undergone, being terrified by the uproar, sent me to ascertain the cause. I was absolutely horror-struck when I entered the street. The infuriated mob filled the air with their cries, shouting, 'the Jews have fired the town-house—they have discharged red-hot arrows through the windows—it is now in flames.'—The yells of the populace were horrible. They rushed on like rabid beasts, imprecating vengeance upon the heads of their innocent victims; broke into the houses, which they pillaged; then set them on fire, and slaughtered the unoffending inmates. I now hastened to my poor mother, who, half dead with affright, had crawled to the stairs, which she ascended in her terror, and was approaching the flames that were bursting from the upper story of the next house. I stood before the door of my home unable to enter, because the plunderers had got possession, and saw the venerable being who had given me life standing at an

upper window, wringing her hands in agony, and crying out, as the flames rapidly approached her, 'Joachim, son of David! my son, my son, where art thou? Do not desert me at this fearful hour!' The robbers now pressed towards her, whilst I, faint and wounded, was unable to afford her the least assistance. 'Cease your howling, Jewish hag!' said a ruffian to the blind and despairing mother: 'there is your son, make the best of your way to the Devil!' So saying, he hurled her into the flames. Peace be to her ashes!"

A profound silence ensued as Joachim concluded. The judge was unable to utter a word, but fixed his eyes, with a confused stare, upon the grated window, when Joachim added, "That poor blind woman, sir, was my mother; and he who threw her into the flames was your grandfather. The same blood runs in your veins; hence I know what a Jew has to expect from the descendant of his mother's murderer. You have here a sufficient proof that I am not so forgetful as you would affect to believe. The grandson may now finish the work of death which the grandfather left incomplete."

The judge continued silent, and seemed absorbed in no very pleasing reflection. He rubbed his forehead, contracted his eyebrows, and appeared perplexed by very disagreeable recollections. "Are you then?"—said he, on a sudden, as if unconscious of what he was about to ask; but as suddenly recollecting himself, he turned towards the secretary, and said, "I have no longer need of your services; reconduct this old man to prison, but see that he be accommodated with a more cheerful apartment, and that he be no longer fettered."

The secretary beckoned to the astonished Joachim, whom Ben David approached to embrace. "A ray of mercy has beamed upon the dwellings of Jacob," said the affectionate son, with emotion; "father, be not disheartened, and trust to the Lord." Joachim embraced his son, and tottered after the secretary.

The judge now resuming his former severity of aspect, said to Ben David, "You see that I can be merciful. I have both the power and inclination to do the same for you, if you will cease to be obstinate. Frederick's accusation is unimpeachable, yet the popular opinion requires that it should be confirmed by

~~your confession.~~ Acknowledge that you attempted the life of Diether, and were hired to commit the crime by ~~his~~ faithless wife. Confess this without fear, and your reward shall be great here, but infinitely greater hereafter."

"Sir," replied Ben David, without hesitation, "did I stand alone upon the precipice which threatens to engulf me, though innocent, I would gladly accept of any terms that would procure my release from a most grievous imprisonment, by an easy death. Gladly would I now depart from this cruel bondage, under the wings of the messenger of mercy, Gabriel, who bears the souls of the innocent into the heavenly Canaan, where 'the prisoners rest together, and hear not the voice of the oppressor.' But it is against the commandment to cause the destruction of an innocent person, by giving false testimony. I know not the elder's wife."

"It is as false as your heart is treacherous," exclaimed the justice, with vehemence. "You have been frequently in her house; I have witnessed of it."

"I have had dealings with that most respected lady," replied Ben David, "yet may

the Lord desert me, if I know any thing further of her."

"You have been seen," resumed the judge, "skulking about the elder's door after sun-set. You were evidently disguised, and carried a bag, no doubt full of money; which, as no robbery had been committed, you must have received as a bribe to murder. Was it not so?"

"Mighty sir!" answered Ben David, endeavouring to conceal his surprise at the charge; "at the time the venerable Diether Frosch was attacked, I was in Costnitz; he who therefore told you he saw me in disguise, must have been either mad or drunk."

"You have exhausted my patience," said the justice, "I shall, therefore, use no more endeavours to bend your stubborn spirit. You will be more communicative, however, upon the rack."

"Time will show," said Ben David, coolly. He was now again loaded with fetters, and conducted back to his dungeon.

CHAPTER VII.

DIETHER was about to quit his door, to take a saunter in his garden, when he perceived a man, habited in the costume of a peasant, ascending the steps with a basket on his back. "What are you doing there?" asked the elder.

The man stood suddenly still—looked up—opened his mouth—stared—put the hair aside from his forehead, and, holding his cap in his hand, enquired whether Madame Margaret Frosch, the elder's lady, resided here.

Diether replied in the affirmative, and bid the gaping countryman draw near. "What do you want with the respected lady?" asked the old man, while the peasant, looking anxiously around, increased his suspicions.

"I want to speak with her," the man answered; whose features, and which his language

did not at all contradict, were the very image of stolidity. "My wife told me the gentleman was to know nothing about it; but perhaps,"—added he—"you are the gentleman?"

"No!" replied Diether: "I am Madame Margaret's confidential friend, and you can do no better than deliver your message to me; because the good lady is absent from home just now, and will not return for some days."

"Indeed!" said the peasant, leaning on his stick; "that is unfortunate! who, then, good sir! is to receive the contents of my basket?"

"I will receive both your message and the contents of your basket," said the elder, opening the door, and inviting the stranger to enter—"I shall thus, at the same moment, stop your tongue and relieve your shoulders."

The peasant looked round the room with an expression of dissatisfaction, hesitating whether he should sit down or depart.

Diether, however, ordered him to exhibit the contents of the basket forthwith; when, after some hesitation, he complied, by removing a piece of coarse linen which covered it, and exposing to view a female child, that appeared to have just awaked. The in-

fant stretched out its little hands to old Diether, who took it in his arms, while he looked with astonishment, alternately at the bearer and his burthen.

“What is this?” said he; “a child!”

The countryman laughed, and replied—
“My soul, sir, it is a child!”

“Whose?” asked Diether, “tell me!”

“My soul, sir, if I knew I would tell you,” replied the peasant, scratching his head.

“Is this man your father?” said Diether to the infant, as it laid its little head upon his breast.

The child shook its head, when Diether, turning towards the stranger, who had been looking on with perfect indifference, said, “Who then are *you*?”

“My soul,” replied he, “I will tell you, good sir, and friend, that I was christened Paul, and that I am the own man of the great Count von Katzenelbogen. We poor people never know how old we are; but I know for certain that John’s-day returns this year for the twenty-first time since I was coupled with my Willhild at Wiesbad; for at Moorweiler we have no priest—all this I know.”

"Willhild?" repeated Diether, "she was the nurse of my little son—of the elder Diether's, I would say.—Was she your wife?"

"My soul, sir, she is my wife, if the priest joined us fairly."

"Well, but tell me quickly, what about the child, and what do you want with Madame Margaret?"

"Why now," said Paul, "my wife thinks it would be best taken care of here, because it is the daughter of the lady—"

"What lady?" exclaimed Diether, while the bile began to stir within him. "The lady Margaret? Who is her daughter?"

"Ho, you must know that better than I can," replied the countryman, "if you are the friend of the family. The fair gentlewoman, who was carried off last week from the road—"

"Is her name Wallrade?"

"Just so," continued Paul, "and the child here is her little daughter, which she left behind with us. We were to take care of it until she returned."

"Wallrade's child?" said Diether, in dismay. "Merciful God! At every turn I find something dreadful connected with those I love!"

How did the young lady come to you ?" added he, addressing the stranger.

"In a carriage," replied Paul, "what the women were prating about together I know not; for I had bond-service to perform for my master, and Willhild is not over communicative. It was on a Saturday before the Lord's birth, I was to go in with them and say yes to every thing which the mother of this child should relate."

"Before the Lord's birth?" said Diether, correcting him, "you mean before Christmas?"

"Ay, before Christmas. Right master, I am but a fool, though an honest man. It is not long since. The lady was very angry, and said, not once, but many times, I will come back—I will tell my father—that however does not concern you.—"

"Alas! my foreboding!" murmured Diether, "is but too surely realized. Wallrade has disgraced her family by introducing into it a spurious offspring." He bent a look of agony upon the child, and desired Paul to proceed with his story.

"I am at the end on't already," said the peasant. "The lady was stolen, and I ran

home without knowing whither she had been conveyed. The devils hunted me like a hare, and Willhild scolded me into the bargain. As the lady never returned, and there were no tidings of her, Willhild said to me; to-morrow, Paul, take the little girl in a basket and carry her to Madame Margaret, for the mother I fear has gone dead, and I should not die in peace if the child were not to be taken care of. Tell the honoured lady not to be angry with me, for I was obliged to speak for the salvation of both our poor souls, and that the old gentleman might no longer be deceived."

"Proceed," said the elder, with extreme agitation.

"Take care, however, not to be surprised by the master; said my good wife," continued Paul, "or it might be with this child as with little Johannes—"

"Silence!" cried Diether, sternly, "I wish to learn no more. Leave your charge here, and pack—I have nothing to do with a blockhead like you. But send Willhild here to-morrow, and bid her not fail or she may repent—away fellow."

"My soul! why so angry, dear friend?" said

Paul, trying to soften him, "I will execute your orders faithfully, and Willhild will certainly come if she be able. But"—here he again scratched his head, "it is a very ticklish thing."

"How so?" asked Diether, sharply.

"The poor woman will probably be dead. When I came away this morning, the priest said she had only two hours to live. If you, however, were a confidential friend of the master, as you are of the mistress, I might give you a little note that I have for him."

Diether eagerly snatched the note which the peasant took from his vest. "It was given to me," said Paul, "by a man in disguise, when I left Moorweiler; I suppose he has his particular reasons for not bringing it himself."

Diether eagerly opened the note, and read the following words:—"Know, counsellor and elder, Diether Frosch, that a friend, anxious to preserve your honour, has determined to disclose to you where your daughter Wallrade is concealed. If at the next full moon, about eleven o'clock at night, you will come to the stone called Sprünglin, near Bergen, and bring with you four hundred marks, of good sterling

mintage, you shall be informed of every particular whereby you may recover your lost child.— You must, however, come alone.—

“AN UNKNOWN FRIEND.”

Diether looked suspiciously, first at the note, and then at the bearer; the latter, however, fearing a storm, had taken care to get out of the way. The elder called his valet, who, upon being questioned, protested that he had never before seen the child. “Eitel!” said his master, whilst his eyes were directed towards the poor infant, who had crept into a corner of the room where she sat trembling and sobbing,— “is my daughter’s servant returned from attending my son?” The valet replied in the negative. “Is the serving-woman still unwell?” Eitel informed his master, that the fever had somewhat abated since yesterday, but that she was not yet able to leave her bed. Deither ordered him to send up his daughter’s waiting-maid, and in the mean while paced up and down the room in a state of fretful impatience. “Must I then,” said he to himself, “learn from a serving-wench what already makes my very blood boil to think of. But I will exert my energies. I will remain true to myself, even though treachery is

practising its arts against me. I will at least use my best endeavours to defend the honour of my house."

He carried the child into an inner apartment, where Wallrade's waiting-maid shortly entered, to receive his commands. She was a pale but handsome woman, verging towards middle age.

"You are truly a most exemplary wench," said Diether, sarcastically, "your mistress is languishing in cruel confinement, and you give yourself no more thought about her helpless child, than if it were a scarecrow."

"Her child?" rejoined the woman in surprise, and deeply blushing. "Alas! good sir, you know——"

"I do, indeed," said Diether, while the confirmation of Paul's statement smote him to the soul. "But it was quite infamous in you to have allowed——"

"Pardon me, sir," said the maid with a sigh, "It is the servant's duty to obey whatever masters or mistresses may command. Surely God has been merciful towards the poor babe; for in whose hands could she have so happily fallen——"

"As in the dying Willhilde's?" interrupted the elder, sharply. "It was unpardonable both in mother and nurse to place the child in a miserable cottage with a dying peasant, only in order to keep that secret from me with which I was already but too well acquainted."

The maid was about to speak—

"Silence!" cried the old man, in extreme agitation, "I see clearly how it is, and need not your interpretation. There is the child. To-day it may remain with you here. I command you, however, to suffer it to be seen by no one; and least of all by Madame Margaret. Where the mother is not a willing guest, the offspring will be despised." He then promised to prepare by the following day an asylum for the maid and little girl, in which they should remain until the mother's liberation.

The woman observed a respectful silence: an expression of surprise, however, was visible in her countenance, when Diether placed the child in her arms which immediately hid its little face in her neck, lisping "dear Gundel!" She caressed the lovely little Agnes, and having satisfied the elder's inquiries, as well as

she was able, concerning the attack upon the road, she quitted the apartment with her weary burthen.

Diether paced the room unable for some time to appease the *rancour* which raged within him. It subsided at length, however, into a silent but settled grief. The terrible suspicion that he had been betrayed by his wife and son, and dishonoured by his daughter, wrung tears of agony from the old man's eyes, and, in this state of miserable dejection, he was found by the chief justice, who unexpectedly appeared before him.

The entrance of the functionary made no disagreeable impression upon the suffering Diether. During a considerable course of years they had acted together as servants of the state, and had maintained a social intercourse without becoming intimate friends. The chief justice was a man of violent passions, easily excited, but with difficulty appeased; he had, however, the skill to perceive where he could venture to give the rein to his violent impulses, and where it was prudent to disguise his natural inflexibility. As he was not a man of gallantry he had never excited the elder's suspicions, and no impediment was therefore thrown in the way of his visiting the

house whenever he felt disposed. Even the conspicuous part which he took against Dagobert at Lempurg had caused no rupture between Diether and the judge; habit had long united them, if not in the bonds of friendship, at least in those of official affinity, and neither of them were friends to Dagobert. Deither offered his guest his hand.

"May God rule in your house," said the chief justice; "forgive me for breaking in so abruptly upon your retirement. No traces can be found of your daughter, and the town-major begins to despair of recovering her. The issue must be left to time. My present visit is upon a different business. I am in search of Vollbrecht, your son's servant. His former master is implicated with the Hebrew criminals in a most atrocious violation of the laws, and the servant is privy to the whole transaction."

"Vollbrecht is in attendance upon Dagobert," rejoined the elder. "Then my word for it," said the justice querulously, "neither of them will ever return. It is impossible that your son can be gone in search of his sister, since the place of her captivity must be well known to him. I regret, my friend, that you

have so little cause to rejoice in the heir of your house, for, as to little Johannes—”

“ Silence, in the name of Heaven!” said Diether, interrupting him, “ my heart is already convulsed with grief and rage. I can no longer have any doubt. But of this enough. My guilty wife will be henceforth an alien from my affections.”

“ And yet you will not believe what is notorious to the whole town,” resumed the justice. “ Vice soon rises into a monstrous growth, if it be not crushed in the embryo. Believe me, Ben David was the assassin who attempted your life, and was employed by Margaret. Do not shake your head ; there is damning evidence against them ; if not conclusive, at least strongly presumptive. Your servant, Eitel, thinks he could identify the man who quitted your house one evening just preceding the murder. He has no doubt but that it was the Jew laden with money. Dagobert, too, had procured, about this time, a dispensation from the pope, and was on the eve of returning home. The old father, the infirm husband, was in the way—you understand me.”

“ Oh, that I am compelled to believe this!”

exclaimed the miserable elder; "but have I not heard with my own ears the wretched woman impressing upon her lover the necessity of saving the Jew? For what purpose was this, if not——"

"Hear further," continued the chief justice; "there is a boy in the town-prison, who was a pupil of the journeyman weaver of Borames. He was found in company with a gang of murderers, without, as he swears, knowing one of them; nor would he be able, as he states, to point out their place of abode, to which he was carried in the night during a heavy fall of snow. He asserts, however, that in that den of infamy he heard a cavalier bargain with a Jew to murder you for ten pounds of copper money."

"And who was this cavalier?" asked Diether, while his lip quivered.

"Either Dagobert, or your brother-in-law, the Leuenberger," replied his communicative friend.

"Horrible!" said the credulous old man, staggering to a chair. "The secret dagger is aimed against my life, and I cannot see whence the blow will come."

"The way to unwind the web of iniquity in

which you are entangled," continued the wily judge, "would be to suffer the process which I will immediately commence against your wife to take its free course. The truth must then come to light."

"Never," exclaimed Diether, firmly, "I will never be the public herald of my dishonour. Would you have me trumpet to the world the infamy in which my family is involved? Would you have me deliver up the wife, whom I once loved, to public shame and to an ignominious death? I will make no accusation against her, and forbid you to do it. She is still my wife—the mother of my—but let it pass—I will never publicly denounce her. She will no longer share my confidence or my home—this will be her sufficient punishment. Let her then live to repent the wrongs she has heaped upon an injured husband."

"I sympathize with you from my soul," said the hypocritical judge; "but I fear it will be impossible to avoid a public scrutiny. The bailiff's order"—

"The bailiff will not appear as an accuser when I am silent," observed Diether, warmly.

“Why, as to that,” replied the other, after a pause, “allow me to call your attention to a few particulars which you appear to have overlooked:—your son has committed a scandal which is known to all the town. He has blotted your escutcheon by a criminal connexion with your wife. It is, moreover, more than probable that he was the author of the late attempt upon his father’s life. He has resisted one of the highest authorities of the state by defending a Jewess in the public streets; and is now living, as there is but too much reason to believe, in criminal intercourse with this vile outcast, whose retreat we are now seeking to discover, in order to visit the profligate woman with a just and signal retribution. A resistance to the public authorities—an insult offered to the emperor in the person of his representatives—incest, apostacy, and murder, are crimes which demand the immediate interposition of the laws. You would arrest the arm of public justice, but such a malefactor must not escape its inflictions. A writ of outlawry has been already issued against him—he will be therefore tried as an alien who has set the

laws at defiance, and braved his own condemnation. I ask you then, Diether Frosch, what will you do ? ”

The elder was so overcome by the violence of his emotions that he could not reply.

The justice now thundered in his ears, “Think of your oath, Diether Frosch—think of your duty as a sheriff and elder of this imperial city. Remember, I have warned you once—expect not a second warning. Next Tuesday the bench will assemble to hear your accusation.”

“Is it come to this ? ” exclaimed Diether, in agony. “I might as well at once thrust a dagger into the breast of him who is my own flesh and blood, for if I appear as his accuser he is undone.”

“You have already delayed too long to do an act of justice,” said the judge, coolly ; “you had better, therefore, now make amends for the omission, by giving a full evidence against the criminals. I allow that your duty is a hard one, but the performance of the sternest duty is not to be for a moment balanced against the violation of an oath. Farewell, brother. Reflect upon what you have sworn.” The

chief justice now left the elder to his reflections.

As the functionary approached the town-house, he saw the bailiff standing at the gate in conversation with Zodia, whom, however, he immediately dismissed upon perceiving the chief justice. The latter lost no time in informing his friend that, through his exertions, all the mysterious circumstances connected with the elder's family would soon be fully developed.

The bailiff smiled maliciously at this intelligence. "You will have sufficient employment, worthy sir, and your activity bids fair to be abundantly rewarded by a full discovery of the iniquities which have been so lately rife around us. *To me,*" added he, significantly, "fortune has been less propitious; for my excellent agent here, informs me that he has not yet succeeded in discovering Esther's retreat. I will, however, spare neither money nor pains to unkennel that she-fox of Israel."

"Had I been aware," said the judge, "that the Jewess had offended you, I certainly would not have suffered her to escape so quietly."

"Oh! you do not understand what beauty is,"

replied the bailiff, with a sigh ; “ you are utterly insensible to the softer impressions. The squalid countenance of a murderer, who has been languishing for years in your dungeons, has more charms for you than the rosy cheeks and dimpling smiles of a pretty maiden. Secure to me the possession of that lovely object of which I am now in search, and my fish-pond at Feldberg shall be yours. Restore to me but the little fish which you have suffered to escape out of your net, and take, without any reservation, the whole contents of my Feldberg fish-pond, which you have so long desired to possess.”

“ Indeed, bailiff,” said his grave companion with a smile, “ I have been all my life but an indifferent wench-hunter. I will, however, bait a hook for your little fish, and with the greater hopes of success since I have so readily caught a gudgeon.”

At this moment a crowd of people appeared advancing up the narrow street, dancing, singing, and piping, and making all kinds of merry gestures. A figure led the way in a party-coloured dress, with an immense false beard, and armed with a long lance. He was followed

by a person bearing a shield and colours ; while the whole trade of armourers were bawling *vivat*, as the horseman proceeded at a slow and majestic pace.

"Is not that von Hulshofen?" asked the bailiff, who held his hands above his eyes, in order to assist his offuscated vision.

"It is, good sir!" replied the justice; "he returns upon an invitation given in your name. I allowed him to make this pompous entry, on account of the honour which he lately conferred upon our town at Costnitz, by his superiority in the tilts. It now remains with you to announce to him the real purpose of his recal."

"It shall be done upon the spot," replied the bailiff; and Gerard having dismissed his train, after telling them where to fix the trophies which he had gained at the late tournament, and assuring them that he would shortly join them, to conclude the day in festivity, mounted the steps of the chief justice's house, between the judge and the bailiff. In their way to the justice-hall, the merry cavalier bestowed many empty compliments upon the two legal dignitaries, repeating the assurances of friendship, which, as he declared, he had been com-

missioned by princes and other great men to deliver to the sage counsellors of Franckfort. Elated with his success at the tournament, and relying upon the ample fulfilment of his expectations; from the known liberality of the magistracy, Gerard had not yet remarked that the bailiff and the justice preserved an obstinate silence during his flourish of compliments; nor did he perceive the stern gravity of their countenances, until the door of the sheriff's chamber was closed behind them. Then looking, for the first time, in the faces of his companions, he observed an ominous expression, which very much abridged his merriment. He became suddenly serious; and now remembered many a little peccadillo committed in his blither moods, for which he apprehended he might be called to account, with fear and trembling.

“Sir!” said the bailiff, “you have conducted yourself at Costnitz like a man; you have not, however, been recalled to receive praise for your prowess, but to give an account of an action, which is as little becoming the arms you bear, as your rank in the service of this free city. You will, therefore, be pleased to lay

aside your arms, and consider yourself under arrest. It will depend upon your confession whether you remain here, or be transferred to a less agreeable seclusion.

Gerard was confounded.—He scratched his ear, and then played with his belt. “Good sir!” he replied, at last, “I fear I have been misrepresented by some scurvy creditor. The landlord of the Angel at Costnitz has wiped out every score against me, and given me honourable acquittance. With the exception of some paltry trifles, in strict conformity to the divine commandment, I ‘owe no man any thing.’ I cannot, therefore, understand why I am detained in this house.* There must be some mistake, good masters!”

“There is no mistake at all!” replied the haughty justiciary. “Since your recollection appears to be so perfectly associated with inns and drinking-scores, I need only mention the landlord of the Vine at Worms, to bring at once to your remembrance every thing which we desire to know.”

“The rascal!” exclaimed Gerard, in a rage,

* The chief justices’ residence was generally the prison in which persons of consideration were detained for debt.

"would that I could have encountered him at a tournament—I would have struck his thick head from his broad shoulders. The villain lies, if he has told you that he has any just demands upon me."

"Better he had been your creditor," observed the bailiff, contemptuously. "We know, however, that you paid him, but tell us by what means you did so?"

"By what means?" repeated Gerard, in confusion, as the affair with Ben David rushed upon his recollection.

"Ay, by what means?" retorted the judge, "It is clear enough. This hesitation confirms your guilt. You must explain this to our satisfaction before you are honourably received among us."

Gerard now deliberately took his sword from his belt, and handed it to the judge. "Good sir, you will, I trust, in your wisdom and justice, draw a distinction between a fault and a crime. I suppose," he continued, "that your question relates to a certain boy who was suddenly brought to me at Worms, and as suddenly disappeared. I will swear, however, not by this

false beard, but by the honest head which it disfigures, that the cursed Jew ——”

“ You are not now called upon for your oath,” said the bailiff, interrupting him; “ this will be demanded from you at a proper time and place. Now follow the chief justice, who will board and lodge you at the expense of the state.”

Gerard wiped his temples in the sleeve of his doublet, twitched up his trunk-hose, blew his nose through his fingers, and said, with a humorous drawl, “ Your house, kind sir, is so near the Eschenheim prison, that I have quite an antipathy to it, although the residence of a chief justice. I have an unconquerable aversion to taking up my abode in such a neighbourhood, though with the honour of being your guest. If I must go with you against my will, you will soon find that you are entertaining a man of honour. I am guiltless; be merciful, therefore, and let me go.”

The request was refused.

“ Well, then, take an honest man’s bail for my appearance when called upon. Happily, the best friend I have in the world, Dagobert Frosch, the sheriff’s son, resides here. He will,

at once, be security for my good conduct, and a valuable witness in my behalf, since he was privy to the whole affair at Worms."

"Dagobert Frosch do you say?" asked the bailiff: "that young man appears to be implicated in every piece of extraordinary iniquity committed within the imperial dominions."

It was now clear to poor Gerard that he had been too hasty in mentioning his friend. The bailiff suggested to him the wise policy of a candid acknowledgment when he should be examined, and then pointed to the door. Gerard followed the judge without uttering a word, and instead of enjoying copious libations of his favourite Rhenish at the feast which the armourers' corporation had prepared for him, he was conducted to a dismal apartment, with iron door and grated windows, where he was incaged like a household starling. He had entered the town like a conqueror, and was now surrounded by four cold walls. He had dreamt of a triumphal arch as a monument of his prowess; instead of which he beheld before his narrow window the lofty turrets of the Eschenheim prison. He determined to rely upon Dagobert's wisdom to

extricate him from his present dilemma; and, therefore, made up his mind to implicate the young ex-deacon forthwith in his transaction with the Jew, fully satisfied that Dagobert's superior wit would finally get them both out of the difficulty.

CHAPTER VIII.

UPON parting from Esther, Dagobert pressed her hand and said, "farewell, dear girl, may God preserve you!"

The maiden treasured these words in her memory as uttered by one to whom she was so deeply indebted and whom she so tenderly loved. She repeated them with her daily prayers, as if they had a talismanic influence to bring a blessing upon her.

The good Crescentia—a rare example in that dark age—considering that gratitude should be above all worldly prejudices, endeavoured to requite her obligations to the father, by her attentions to the daughter. She therefore did every thing to ensure the comfort of her fair guest.

Esther, therefore, passed her time in as much tranquillity at the farm as she could expect,

under present circumstances. She inhabited a small room at one end of the house, and was seen by no one but Crescentia. She had full leisure, therefore, to think of her poor father, whom she had promised Dagobert, in order to obviate danger to herself and him, that she would not even express a wish to see.

Whenever Crescentia visited her, the conversation invariably turned upon past occurrences and future prospects; and when Esther's hopes of better times appeared shaken, she was cheered by the judicious discourse of her pious hostess, who, knowing from sad experience what it was to suffer, knew also the better how to console.

"Believe me," said the good old woman, "whatever your rabbins may tell you, God extends his love to all mankind alike. It is, indeed, a misfortune, that you are still blinded by the errors which enthrall your sect; the Lord, however, in his good time, will free you from them. Your guardian, who is, moreover, a member of the Holy Church, will no doubt himself undertake the pious work of your conversion. Nowhere in the wide world will you find a fitter person to baptize you. Console yourself, however, until that period arrive. Profit by the

example of such as seek the Lord in their necessities, and repose all their hopes of relief in him. Wealth, my child, cannot impart happiness, as you have sufficiently experienced; neither can health, nor youth, nor beauty, for you have them all and yet you suffer. A quiet conscience, arising from having performed our duty to God and man, is the greatest happiness we can know upon earth, until we shall ascend to the enjoyment of greater in heaven. Look only at the parents of our dear young Dagobert; they are surrounded with all that affluence can furnish, and yet are neither happy nor united."

Esther inquired the reason.

Crescentia shook her head, and said, "It does not become me to repeat what I hear of those whose bread I eat—my Else too, has rather left me to guess at, than really told me, what I have but too much reason to suspect. It is certain that although the same walls enclose them, the elder and his wife nevertheless live separate within them, and Heaven alone knows what ills will yet arise from these unfavourable omens. As a sincere well-wisher of the family, I have every confidence in the mediation of the son, who will soon appear among

us, and I trust reunite his unhappy parents. Reverence this virtuous young man as he deserves, and love him as one of the canonized, for as sure as he dies, so sure will he be a saint in heaven. The sacred profession which he has chosen forbids him to enter the unholy pale of matrimony. In fact, he is one of those rare beings who are of too spiritualized a nature to be loved as husbands;—do you not think so, my dear child?”

Esther crimsoned and was silent, but assented to the truth of Crescentia's proposition by a slight nod. She dared not, however, disclose to her kind hostess what was passing in her thoughts. She felt unable to make known to her that Dagobert was the sole idol of her heart, and that she longed to enjoy a communion with him upon earth before she should be summoned to enjoy it with him in heaven. She could just as little confess that even her father's sorrows excited not within her so painful an emotion, as the fear that her beloved Dagobert might become a sufferer on her account. Distracted with grief on the one hand, and elated with hope on the other, she kept the secret of her feelings locked within

her bosom. Love absorbed every other passion, and subdued her distress for the sufferings of her unhappy relatives. She offered up her daily prayers to the God of her fathers for Dagobert's safe return, for Ben David's and Joachim's liberation through his influence, and her own security until the danger which now threatened her should cease.

The following day, as Crescentia was about to set the customary refectio before her guest, the bell summoned her to the gate. Esther, whose bosom throbbed with the expectation of beholding Dagobert, listened on the stairs. She soon heard the sounds of a male and female voice, issuing from Crescentia's sitting-room. She was about to return disappointed to her retreat, when a gentle step was heard upon the stairs leading to her apartment. She was now animated with fresh hopes. "Oh! he is certainly returned," she thought, "and thinks to take me by surprise. He shall find, however, that I am prepared to meet him. He shall see that my thoughts are employed on him alone, and that I am worthy of his protection by the confidence which I repose in him!"

Filled with these delightful reflections, she bent her head over the stairs towards the approaching object; but what was her consternation, when, instead of Dagobert's fair forehead, encircled with beautiful brown locks, she beheld a red-haired head, and the hideous countenance of the renegade Zodiah.

"Hah, my little runaway, have I found you out at last?" And the ruffian stood in all his revolting deformity before the terrified Esther. She was for the moment paralyzed; but on his attempting to seize her hand, her suspended energies returned, and she repulsed him with the dignity of insulted virtue. She cried in a voice firm, but shrill from unwonted emotion, "Keep back, monster! Dare not to lay upon me a hand polluted with the blood of my fathers!"

Zodiah deriding her interdictions, drew her into her chamber, and closed the door. "Listen to me," said he; "concern yourself no further about your father and Joachim; your railings cannot ameliorate their condition. For whatever I have done, I will answer at the great day of general reckoning."

"Alas!" exclaimed Esther with a sigh.

"what brought you here, faithless son of Jacob?"

"To catch the fugitive bird," replied the savage with an exulting grin. "I have tracked you and your lover to this den of infamy. He has, however, escaped my vigilance for the present, but so long as the wide world contains him, I will have him yet."

Esther turned pale.

"Be composed, however," he continued. "I have not hitherto betrayed you to Gogim, who would load you with fetters; and let this be my pledge that I will not now betray you."

"You are a deceiver!" cried Esther, with energy.

"I am no deceiver," rejoined Zodia, coldly. "What, therefore, has caused your dislike, when I intended to make you my wife, before that vile Christian obtained your favours? Answer me. Did you not crucify the child of Edom, and murder the Friedberger? Have you not yielded yourself to the embraces of an Edomite? Infidelity is the besetting sin of your sex. Inflexible justice would condemn you to the stake—I am merciful, for I forgive you."

"What means all this?" asked the wretched Esther; "are you come to mock me, before you

deliver me over to the executioner? Quit my sight, or I will summon those to my assistance, who shall enforce your departure."

"And thereby the sooner seal your own destruction," replied Zodia, with a savage smile. Execute your threat. There is a guest now with the old housekeeper, who would readily get acquainted with the seducer of his son. The elder, Diether Frosch, is below, and I now arrest you in his name."

"Merciful God!" exclaimed Esther, wringing her hands in agony. "Desert me not at this fearful hour. Suffer me not to fall into the enemies' snares! But would it not be better that I should share my father's fetters than live a life of infamy and everlasting reproach?"

"Or would it not be better," said Zodia, taunting her, "that you accepted the kind offers of the venerable bailiff, than pine in solitary wretchedness, without a companion to cheer your solitude?"

Esther was more disgusted at the wishes of the sensual Christian, than at the insult which she had received from the renegade Jew.

Zodia continued, "If you are wise, Esther, you will be silent, and confide in me. You are

too beautiful to be the slave of the vile judges of Amalek. I am neither inclined to give you up to them, nor to the young Goi. The villain once disgraced me by a foul blow, and that I never can forgive: for it is said, 'that the stock of him who strikes one of the people of Israel shall become extinct.' Consent to be my wife, and neither Ben David nor Joachim shall die."

Esther fixed her eyes upon him, and said nothing.

"Decide," continued Zodia; "give up the Christian—to whom he opened the gates of Hades!—and speak to me like a bride to her betrothed."

"Villain!" replied the maiden, firmly; "those eternal fires in which the spirits of the wicked shall be tormented everlastingly would be more welcome to my soul, than a kiss from thy polluted lips to my body. Away, monster, do whatever your ferocious malignity may dictate, but rather would I die ten thousand deaths of the most excruciating torments, than comply with your odious wishes."

"Why this rage?" asked Zodia, calmly. "There is nothing extraordinary in my request. You were the daughter of the rich Ben David

and I was the despised servant of a wealthy mistress. Now you are the child of a poor criminal, under sentence of death, and I am a rich suitor for a portionless maiden. I am more—I am one of the redeemed, and an indigent Jewess should account herself honoured in being wooed by a wealthy Christian. Be that, however, as it may, your opposition will avail you nothing. 'Twill be as impotent as your railing. By my soul's salvation, I will take you home with me before the waning of yonder moon, either as a bride, or as a victim. You hear my determination, and you shall find that I have the resolution to fulfil it."

"Monster!" cried Esther, still maintaining her firmness, though every drop of blood had receded from her lips and cheeks, "what would your mad cruelty prompt you to perpetrate. If you meditate my ruin, murder me at once, for I know you to be familiar with the most odious crimes. Betray me into the hands of what *you*, and such Christians call justice, and pocket your unhallowed bribe—the base barter for blood; for I would rather place my neck under the axe of the executioner, than fall into the hands of a wretch like thee."

"Mighty well," exclaimed Zodiah, with a

sneer. "You will know me better than you have done. You have misjudged me—trust in me, and you will have no cause to repent. Farewell; but," he added, turning from the door, "I have promised your father to bring him some token of your being alive. You will not refuse him this consolation in his bereavement. Give me either the ring on your finger, or a lock of your hair, that I may prove to him how faithfully I have executed his will."

Esther fixed her eyes upon him, as if she would look into his very soul. "What am I to think?" she cried. "Your character appears a riddle. At one moment I look upon you with loathing—as the very 'off-scouring' of corruption; for I see in you the betrayer of my parent and his venerable sire. I behold them the wretched victims of your hypocrisy and perjury. The base proposals, the vile taunts and brutal threats, with which you have just shocked my ears, would dispose me to look upon you as a raving maniac, escaped from your cell. And yet your show of sympathy for my father, induces within me the hope that I may have mistaken you. I would, indeed, willingly persuade myself that you are some poor misguided

creature, who is mischievous more from stupidity than vice, could you convince me that your request is not a piece of vile artifice to betray me."

"If I have not promised to bring your father a pledge of your life and liberty," said Zodiah, with an oath, "may I grow crooked, and become like the meanest reptile that lives upon the filth of the earth! May my father never be carried into Abraham's bosom, but return to this world and torment me through seven eternities! May all the blood of Israel and of Edom fall upon my head like the rocks of the valley of Jehoshaphat, if I——"

"Forbear these dreadful imprecations," said Esther, shuddering; and cutting off a small lock from one of her beautiful tresses, gave it to the deceitful Zodiah. "Take this," she continued, "to the poor captive in Babylon; and may the High Anointed Lord so turn your stubborn soul, that you may retract your perjury, and rescue my parent from a horrible death."

"Say no more!" rejoined the apostate.—
"Though I cannot save your father's life—
God help me for an impotent man, yet no sin—

ner—I will nevertheless avert the most dreadful part of the sentence, if you will only say to me—*Massal tosch!*

Esther turned from him in disgust : when he said, with a threatening frown, “ What people refuse by supplication, they frequently accede to by force. We shall meet again—think of me. At our next meeting I may find thee in a better mood—Farewell !”

The ruffian now took his leave, and left the maiden a prey to the most dismal forebodings. In a few minutes Crescentia cautiously entered.

“ My child !” said she, not without betraying emotion, “ you must be careful for the present not to quit your apartment, lest your retreat should be discovered.”

It now occurred to Esther, for the first time, that old Diether might have visited the farm ; and she anxiously inquired if the elder suspected Crescentia of harbouring her.

Crescentia was somewhat surprised at the question. “ How could you have known that Diether Frosch has been here, if you had not been listening at the bottom of the stairs ? Curiosity is the failing of your tribe ; but in this instance it was attended with extreme hazard.

You know not what you have escaped. The old gentleman was so enraged, that had he discovered you, he would have at once committed you to prison, and dismissed me from his service."

Esther made no reply, as she did not think it prudent to betray any further knowledge of the visit. "Happily," continued Crescentia, "you have escaped detection; but the elder has brought new inmates to the farm-house, who have taken up their quarters exactly under this room: I recommend you, therefore, to be exceedingly cautious, and neither go out of your apartment, nor make any noise in it."

"New inmates?" asked Esther, inquisitively, "and brought by the elder!"

"Yes, indeed!" said the old woman, with a sigh. "The world becomes more wicked every day. It appears as if I were about to be appointed keeper to all the stray misses, who may either choose to banish themselves, or are banished, from the city."

Esther's bright eye kindled.

"No reference to you, my dear child," continued the garrulous old woman. "With the exception of your father being a Jew, which nei-

ther you nor he can help, you are better than many a Christian. My own eyes tell me that you are well-favoured, and I'd swear to your honesty, if it were only because young Dagobert thinks you worthy of his protection. My new guest, however, is not quite so pure as the blossoms on my apple trees ; and between ourselves I suspect that the late differences in the elder's family may be all traced to her."

"Of whom do you speak?" asked Esther.

"The wench whom my old master has just conducted hither. He has placed her with her child, a beautiful babe, under my care till further orders. He declares himself to be much interested about this child. He says—and I believe it, for one must be a drone not to guess at the truth—that he does not consider it prudent to harbour the mother and infant in his own house ; and in this I agree with him, since the mistress governs at home, and would be apt to demur at seeing strange women and children under her roof. My little quiet dwelling is thus to be converted into a cuckoo's nest."

"What can all this mean?" inquired the anxious Esther.

"Simply this, that an old simpleton has been

duped by a young hussy, and that the fruit of his folly is to be concealed here. For my part, I am now too old to be much concerned about what the master and mistress do. I have only to look quietly on and say nothing—to obey orders—control my feelings—and let things take their course. I shall not presume to ask the prudish minx a single question; she may do just as she pleases, but when the good mistress comes, which she is wont to do every spring once or twice, and orders me to open the rooms that she may inspect them, then will the decrepit husband of sixty, of whom I had always expected better things, be detected in the sins of his old age. But”—and a slight blush tinged her cheek—“I may be wronging an innocent man. Why should I condemn him upon mere surmise? When the son returns, take care, my child, that you mention nothing of what I have now communicated; for children ought not to be acquainted with the errors of their parents, much less such dutiful sons as young Dagobert.”

When the old woman was gone, Esther sought a relief to her sorrows in tears. “Alas!” she cried, “how bitterly am I punished for my

defection from the faith of my fathers ! How do the prophetic words of my grandfather Joachim now dwell upon my fevered memory, when he taxed me with favouring a believer in the crucified man ? Did he not then set before me the fate of the angels Asah and Asael, who lusted after the daughters of men ? For more than a thousand years these spiritualized beings have hung suspended betwixt heaven and earth, where the jealous and terrible God has fixed them in his wrath. And shall I not, too, share their fate ? A prey to a passion which, at one moment, warms my heart like a pure ray from heaven ; and, at another, tortures my soul like a raging fire from Hades. I am perpetually chasing an object which eludes my grasp, and yet I cannot relinquish the pursuit. I feel one while sunk into the bottomless pit, and at another exalted to the eternal paradise.—But shall I relinquish my everlasting hopes for a phantom ? Imperious duty now summons me to the prison of my father ; and shall I longer hesitate to obey the imperious mandate ? But love detains me here, and how can I disobey ? He is Omnipotent ! ‘Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it’—he is

‘strong as death!’ For him I abandon Joachim and Ben David to their sufferings. Can I, however, be justified in acting thus? Oh! mother, to whom be opened the gates of paradise! Who bore me in sorrow and brought me forth in anguish, although thou art now a disembodied spirit, be nigh to succour thy unhappy daughter! Most Holy, Most Mighty, and Everlasting God! to whom the sons of Jacob, as well as the worshippers of the crucified Man, address their prayers, protect the noble youth whom I honour as one among thy blessed community. May he be endowed with might to break the iron yoke, under which my venerated fathers groan, and release them from oppression! The traitor to his creed and to his God has discovered my retreat, and who knows but that ere the rising of to-morrow’s sun I may be betrayed into the hands of my enemies? I would fly but dare not. Whither could I go? Where does he tarry who is the only rock upon which I build my hopes? How often do I fancy him coming to me, ‘riding upon the wings of the wind,’ and enthroned upon the morning clouds! From the east comes all that is good—all that is true. Towards the east I

often listen for his approach. From the rising of the sun the High Anointed looks into our temples, and from the east must Dagobert also return." She now forced open the closed shutter of the little window, when her eye sought her beloved in the east—he was not there. She then looked for him among the rosy hues which the setting sun scattered over the western horizon—he was not there. She distinguished, however, a man creeping slowly along the garden wall by the roadside, who appeared busied in collecting herbs. He suddenly raised his head, when Esther recognised Joseph the Jewish physician. She instantly drew back, and offered up a fervent prayer to heaven that she had escaped the observation of that wicked man.

CHAPTER IX.

THE castle of Neufalkenstein, the seat of Bechtram von Bilbel, had not, for a considerable period, been the scene of so much bustle as when Count Montfort paid the owner a visit, and intrusted him with the capture of Miss Von Baldergrün.

Bechtram, who was accustomed to such adventures, succeeded admirably in executing the count's orders, and the booty turned out perfectly to his satisfaction. The old man and his associates regaled themselves every day upon their plunder, and his wife had enough to do to entertain her guests ; while Wallrade, as if indifferent to her situation, participated in the scene with that inflexibility of spirit which neither adversity could depress nor prosperity elate. To a stranger the constraint to which she was subjected would have appeared as if it

had been her own free choice. She had the address, by making light of her condition, to blind the persons who surrounded her, leading them to suppose that the whole occurrence, far from being disagreeable to her, was a frolic in which she participated with haughty good will. She gave up her jewels and property to the robbers with a contemptuous indifference; and when Dame Else, Bechtram's housewife, adorned her ungainly person with the spoils, and paraded them before Wallrade in supercilious derision, the latter preserved the most perfect composure. She repaid to the coarse familiarity of the master of the house and his companions, corresponding bluntness, and returned such keen answers to the malicious sarcasms of the Leuenberger and Petronella, as generally turned the laugh against them. On the whole, Wallrade appeared, not like a weak captive woman, but like a resolute champion, never receiving an assault without returning the compliment with interest.

However unexpected this conduct might be to the inmates at Neufalkenstein, it certainly failed not of its end, and the energetic maiden

soon had the satisfaction of observing its success.

The host and his associates, would probably have taken advantage of her forbearance, and have only treated her with the greater contumely; but the singular boldness of her effrontery and quickness of her repartees, appeared to these ruffians qualities worthy of a better fate. Bechtram smiled when his fair captive called him a good-for-nothing old vagabond, and his dwelling a den of thieves; Else laughed at Wallrade's witticisms upon her gastronomical display, and the wild Hornberge^r was in raptures when he beheld her mounted on horseback, and governing an unruly charger with all the skill and energy of a man. The squinting Doring, the dissolute Reifenberger, the lusty Henne von Wiede, Bechtram's companions, as well as the roving Eppsteiner, endeavoured to amuse her either by facetious anecdotes, by a game at draughts, or by the relation of some little capture which they had made on their excursions. The Leuenberger gradually laid aside much of his austerity towards the captive, and became at length so

sociable as to excite the attention and consequent banterings of the party. Aunt Petronella, finally abashed at Wallrade's free and unconstrained demeanour, smothered her spleen, and was dumb; Dame Else, who was fond of a gossip in a confidential circle, challenged Wallrade to a war of words, who gladly accepted it, in order to get rid of the Leuenberger's importunities. As soon as she was permitted to retire, she ascended the watch-tower, where, seating herself upon a stone bench between the huge battlements, she gave vent to the stormy feelings of her bosom, and which were only the more violent, in proportion as they had been suppressed.—She pressed her burning forehead against the cold stones, every now and then casting her eyes towards Franckfort—but no one approached to her rescue. She had hitherto found no opportunity of despatching a messenger to her father, and she had therefore no immediate prospect of release. Notwithstanding all her dissimulation and resolution, she felt disheartened and irritated, when she thought of Count Montfort, whom she guessed to be the author of her captivity, although this was denied by Bechtram. She dreaded an interview

with him, and became therefore the more anxious for her liberation. Of this, however, there was no prospect for the present, as the place of her retreat was a secret to all her family, and none of the inmates of Neufalkenstein were likely to betray it. Montfort could not have inflicted upon her a severer punishment than thus depriving her of liberty, and she would have given all the gold in the universe for permission to mount one of the coursers which she saw just saddled in the court below. The servants of the prison, about a dozen in number, crept out of their cells well armed, and capered about the courtyard, bandying coarse jokes, while the smith inspected the horses' hoofs, hastily replacing the shoes that were broken, and fastening those that were loose.

In the mean while Bechtram appeared with his companions at the lattice-gate. It was evident from their equipment that they were not going on an excursion of pleasure. They were all armed, and having mounted their horses, they nodded a familiar farewell to the housewife, who offered her hand to Bechtram through the grating; they then plunged into the nar-

row archway, and galloped over the draw-bridge. The Leuenberger, who remained behind in charge of the house, gave the necessary orders to the sentinel to close the gates. The bridge was drawn up, the few people who remained in the citadel went to their several employments or to their pastimes, and a death-like silence soon reigned throughout the castle. After a short interval, however, footsteps were heard hastily ascending the tower in which Wallrade was confined, when the keeper of her prison unexpectedly appeared before his captive. Feeling his responsibility, he had narrowly inspected the different wards of the castle to see that all was secure; after which, abruptly entering Wallrade's apartment, he said, sarcastically, "I must see if our ladybird has been trying her wings."

"In good sooth her wings are clipped, or she would try them, never fear her," replied Wallrade, with a smile. "She is, however, inhaling the same air as the larks, though not with quite so free a wing. How cheerful the note of those beautiful choristers as they approach the captive's dungeon."

"Why call yourself a captive?" replied Veit,

advancing. "You are more mistress at Neu falkenstein than Dame Else herself."

"Spare your flattery," said the maiden, "and, above all, let it not reach Dame Else's ears. You know she is not to be amused with stale jests, and is jealous of her authority—"

"As I am, when you cast those beautiful eyes upon another," added Veit, with affected gallantry.

Wallrade smiled incredulously. The Leuenberger had recourse to protestations. "May I be cast from a mule, and break my neck upon the spot, if I utter a falsehood. I should belie my honesty if I were to say that I was pleased with you from the first ; but love, like a wart, is of gradual growth, and the older it is, the more difficult to get rid of. You know that I do not flatter, as you are a shrewd wench, and can distinguish plain spoken truths from mere flourishing pretensions."

"My good Leuenberger," replied Wallrade, "most men seem to think that the best way to make an impression upon a woman's heart, is to pour nonsense into her ear."

"I am not among the number," said Veit, laughing. "I have never wooed a maiden yet,

though I am fully disposed to do so now. I am acquainted with the art of taming a wild bird, but know not that of winning a woman. May the devil fetch me, if I am not in earnest, and do not adore you as a nun adores the image of her saint. I have never been easily bent to another's will; I will now bend before yours like a reed before the zephyr. Impose upon me what you will, and as a proof of my attachment I engage to do it though it were to plunge armed cap-a-pee into the Maelstrom, as the doughty Curtius did into the gulf at Rome. Be but kind, and you will find me as pliant as a young osier. Come, let us marry, and should consanguinity prove an obstacle, you know dispensations are to be had for money, and there can be no objection as a point of conscience, since the same blood does not run in our veins.

"Why, you are madder than the Bohemian heretic!" observed Wallrade, jocosely.

"Plague and pestilence!" exclaimed the Leuenberger, sawing the air with his mahogany-coloured hands, "ask only a proof of my love. I leave you the choice, and may I be skinned like a tortured eel, if I don't give it you, even to the damning of my soul. What can I say

more? Shall I throw that deaf mongrel, who is squatting there like a block upon a mat, neck and heels over the tower? Or shall I engage in combat at odds? Ask what you please, I'll do it, or may lentils be my poison!"

"Your proofs of affection," replied Wallrade, "are none of the most convincing; for how can I rely upon the love of that man, who would put a fellow-creature to death in mere wantonness, under the pretence of doing me a pleasure, whilst he beholds me in a state of the lowest humiliation, without making any attempt to relieve me from it? You ask me to put your affection to the test:—I will. Open the gate of this prison; or, do what is easier, inform my father of the place of my captivity, and when I am free, try your fortune as my suitor."

The Leuenberger was perplexed, and observed for some time a profound silence; during which, Wallrade fixed her piercing eyes upon him. He played with the buttons of his sleeve—stroked his chin, and bit his lips.—"Noble lady," said he, at length, "I cannot do your bidding. Men of honour—and all of our profession are men of honour—are

also men of their word. Mine is pledged to Bechtram: from your father, moreover, I never received any thing but ingratitude. He would infinitely rather see me nailed by the ears to the great gate at Franckfort, than acknowledge me for a son-in-law."

"Of my father's hatred towards you," replied Wallrade, "I know nothing; but I think, if what you profess be true, that you might at least confide in *my* gratitude." The look of tenderness by which these words were accompanied, might have subdued the Leuenberger's resolution, had it not been counteracted by a dread of Bechtram's vengeance, and the remembrance of Diether's hatred.

"What a stir you make about nothing," answered the sturdy wooer. "Your detention cannot last for ever. You are just as well here as in more splendid apartments. Marry me, and see what I will do when we are one bone and one flesh. I'll perform more vows than I have already made, should it be your will, and even make a pilgrimage to Loretto, with pins through my doublet, and a steel baldric under it, in order to sanctify me for the holy estate of matrimony. Come, sweet wench,

consent, and be assured of a happy marriage. All we want is one of the shorn crowns to give us God's blessing, and make a unit of two loving souls. Come, what say you, sweet maiden?"

"That you are so infinitely beneath my contempt, that I would rather wed your friend the Hornberger's bull-dog," replied Wallrade while the blood rushed into her cheeks. The knight of the highway was for a moment abashed, and dropped his head in some confusion upon the breastwork of the tower.— "Conceited blockhead!" audibly murmured the indignant maiden, and turned from him in disgust. The Leuenberger, however, perceiving his aunt at her window, which was just below where he stood, invited her to ascend the tower, with Dame Else, and enjoy the free air. "My aunt shall tell us some of her odd stories," said he to Wallrade, with a kind of silly laugh, for want of something wiser to say, "and thereby divert your thoughts, and stifle my recollections; for I would fain forget what your lips have just uttered."

Wallrade was displeased at this proposal, and rose to retire; it was, however, too late;

for by this time the approaching footsteps were heard, and in a few moments Dame Else advanced, with Petronella hobbling after her. The former forced her captive, who had already reached the stairs, back into the apartment. "Hah! where are you going?" said she, in a harsh, masculine voice. "Remain where you are, or you will be tethered, maiden." Saying this, she turned Wallrade round, and pushed her gently into a chair; then offering her hand to her companion, who was panting with her exertions—"So—we are well here. Have you told Wilpert to bring up a tankard of cool wine and the venison-pasty, made from the fat buck that was stolen last week from the convent buttery?"

Petronella gave an affirmative nod, when Else clapped her horny hands and drew a distaff and spindle out of the leathern girdle which encircled her bulky circumference. The tower-keeper was ordered to hasten after the lazy Wilpert, while the old women seated themselves upon the benches between the battlements. "In good sooth a fair country," said Petronella, after she had ceased coughing, "blessings upon us! if every thing we see before us were but ours! what say you dame?"

Else replied in a coarse tone of contempt, "you would not express such idle wishes, if you possessed a house of your own. Such thoughts never enter my head. I am contented with this castle, with plenty to eat and drink; and if I get what I wish, why I don't trouble myself about other people's lands or houses." She now gave her distaff a consequential swing and struck the Leuenberger on the shoulder, who, lost in thought, had turned his back towards the women.

"Dame Else!" he exclaimed, starting round and rubbing his shoulder, "your sceptre is a very rough one, and your fair hand is not over gentle when it deals a blow—'tis as hard and sinewy as an ox's hoof."

"Do you think so?" rejoined the dame, "I should like to bring it in contact with the skulls of those ragamuffins who slip in and out of the house like sorcerers—forgive me, Leuenbergeress, for speaking of sorcerers—"

"Oh, there is no harm," said Petronella, interrupting, "if you only *talk* of them; but they must not be permitted to pass the doorstead; you have, however, taken good care of that, I see, dame, by the horse-shoe which is nailed on

your gate ; yet a surer defence still, is to lay every morning two straws crosswise, upon the threshold, and then neither witch nor sorcerer will ever come near you."

" You are a clever housewife," replied dame Else, " and I shall no doubt learn much from your experience before you leave us."

" Oh, my aunt is more learned than the pope's legate," rejoined the Leuenberger, " and particularly skilled in demonology."

" Indeed ?" exclaimed Else, " had I known this, I might have made trial of her gift of foreknowledge, and given her an opportunity of prophesying success to my husband's excursion, and it is not now too late."

" Ay !" said Petronella, shaking her head like a bullet upon a wire, "'tis well enough to say, but the guest should never interfere with the host's arrangements ; yet if we pay attention to what is passing around us, we may give a good guess at the upshot."

" I do not comprehend you," said Else, smiling ; " your learning confounds me ; you must be talking surely in an unknown tongue."

" The dog," replied the old woman, " was howling all last night, the owl screeched, and

the deathwatch clicked in the wainscot. This portends nothing good. This day, moreover, is not a lucky day, and had I been you, I would not have suffered the old knight to get on horse-back——”

“You alarm me!” rejoined Else, with mock emotion, “but my husband is a rash man who laughs at such things, and fears nothing. D’ye know why?—Because he wears an amulet which he took from a pilgrim, who had just brought it from the burial-place of our blessed Saviour, and ’tis a sure safeguard against peril, but may not its properties be destroyed by being worn in the bosom of an outlaw? What think you, old soothsayer?”

“And why?” asked Petronella, gravely, “the highly venerable order of mendicant friars generally carry charms about them, and we know how little they trouble themselves about outlawry or excommunication.”

“You are a true comforter,” replied Else, giving the old maiden a heavy thwack upon her dorsalexcrecence; “I had half made up my mind to ask our fair guest here to chaunt a *benedicite*, or patter an ave-maria in our chapel for my old husband’s happy return.”

"If any one is fit for the spiritual office in this pious abode," said Wallrade, with a sneer, "I should think it would be the noble cavalier who now stands before you, or the deaf sentinel who is bringing up the venison pasty, *made from the fat buck, that was stolen last week from the convent buttery.*"

"Not so scornful, maiden, or it may chance that you will have cold stones for a bed," roared the angered Else. "We have those among us who wear the hood, and therefore need not your help. Below, sits a poor friar, whom the loss of your company, most worthy Leuenbergeress, has sadly moped, and who, although he has taken his dinner, would nevertheless be sober enough to say mass!"

"What!" exclaimed Petronella, in astonishment, resting her hands upon her skinny hips, "do you mean the poor sore-footed monk who arrived with us here?"

"The same," replied Else coolly; "both he and the peasant who lent you the carriage are our guests against their will, because my husband has his suspicions that if they were at large they might tell tales. An old fox, you see, is not easily cozened. They must make

up their minds, therefore, to remain here, with board and lodging free of expense, until this young lady is set at liberty."

"By my faith, and I'm a true Christian, your husband must be a valorous knight," said Wallrade ironically. "He wars on weak women, and defenceless monks. He will be chronicled as a hero."

"Say nothing about a hero's courage," rejoined Else; "the bravest will not suffer the caged falcon to escape. In truth, thou art a bold wench, and had I a son, I'd not live another day without seeing thee wedded. I should like thee for a daughter, but it cannot be. What avails all Bechtram's labours on the road? Of what use to him are long life, and strength, and wealth? He has nobody to inherit his property, nobly but unlawfully gotten by the sweat of his brow, and at the hazard of his life.—It was a cruel day on which our Philip died, our dear wild boy; then, indeed, the owl screeched like a true bird of ill omen. The brave lad—aye, he was bold as a sparrow-hawk—was thrown from the back of an unbroken colt, dragged in the stirrup, and brought home a corpse."

Else here wiped a tear from her stern, dark eye. "We ordered the vile boor," she continued, "who was by, and did not prevent the accident, only because he could not, to be scourged to death; but this restored not our Philip to life."

A long pause followed the revival of this mournful recollection; when the Leuenberger took the opportunity of reminding Petronella of her tale.

"Let it not be too long, nor too merry," said dame Else. "I am of a mood for neither."

"You shall be obeyed," said the antiquated maiden, and, after making a few grimaces, shaking her chin, and discharging the phlegm from her larynx, began as follows:—

"It is more than two thousand years ago since a rich man took a very beautiful and accomplished woman to wife, with whom he enjoyed every possible happiness, with the exception of having no child.—It happened one cold winter's day, as the wife was sitting under an almond tree in the court-yard peeling, an apple, that she cut her finger, and some of her blood dropped into the snow. 'The snow,' said she, with a sigh, 'is white, and the blood is red.

Oh ! that I had a child of the same complexion.' Scarcely had she uttered these words when she experienced a secret joy at heart, for she felt that she had not spoken in vain. One month passed away, and the snow passed with it: in the second month every thing was green: the earth was covered with flowers in the third: the trees had put on their foliage in the fourth; the blossoms opened, and the birds poured forth their merry notes. When the fifth month had elapsed, the wife stood again under the almond tree, which emitted the most fragrant odour, and she felt a secret joy which she could not repress. In the seventh month she plucked the almonds, and, having eaten of them, became melancholy. At the expiration of the eighth month she called her husband, and said to him, with tears in her eyes; 'If I die, bury me under the almond tree.' She now became quite well again, and scarcely had the ninth month passed when she brought forth a child white as snow and red as blood, and died with excess of joy. Her husband buried her under the tree, according to his promise, and was for some time very much grieved; however, his sorrow gradually abated, and he soon took another wife——"

"The fidelity of man is no fable," said Wall-rade, bitterly; "but proceed."

"The stepmother was delivered of a daughter, who became her darling, while the son of the deceased wife was detested by her, and she thought only of destroying him. Now it so happened that one day the boy, as he came from school, requested his stepmother to give him an apple. She scowled upon him, and, with her eyes darting fire, desired him to follow her into the store-room above, where there was a huge box which had a sharp iron lock. Having opened the lid, she told the boy to take out an apple; the unsuspecting child bent his head forward for that purpose, when she slapped the lid down with great force, and instantly severed it from the trunk. The gory head rolled among the red apples. She then tied it to the body with a white cloth, and, having placed the boy before the door, put an apple into his hand. As she was busied in the kitchen, heating water in a large boiler, her little daughter came in with a doleful countenance, saying, 'Ah! mother, my brother is sitting before the door, and looks as white as snow; he is not eating his apple, and makes no reply to my

questions, although I have asked him for a bit of his apple.' 'If the naughty boy will not speak,' said the mother, 'pull his ears.' Maudlin went away, and did as her mother had told her, when she found her brother lying dead on the ground. The poor child now cried bitterly, when her mother said to her, 'Maudlin, Maudlin, what have you done? We must conceal it from your father!' Hereupon she cut the body in pieces, and, having put them into the boiling water, cooked them for dinner; Maudlin was standing by all the while, crying most piteously, and, as her tears fell into the pot, the dish did not require salt."

"What a dreadful story you are relating," said Else; "may God forgive the wicked step-mother."

"But remember this was only a stepmother," replied Petronella, with a grin, "and many a real mother has done worse."

Else crossed herself, Veit laughed, while Wallrade was silent. The Leuenbergeress resumed:—

"When the father came home, he enquired after his child. The mother made no reply, but served up the dinner. As Maudlin, how-

ever, could not restrain her tears, he asked again, 'Wife, where is my little son?'"

" 'He is gone into the country,' she answered; 'he wished to spend a few weeks with his great uncle, and I could not refuse him!'"

" 'What has the boy taken into his head?' said the husband, pettishly, 'how could he go away, without, at least, bidding his father farewell?' The good man was sorrowful, and could eat nothing; having, however, tasted the horrid dish, his eyes and mouth expanded, and he ate until he consumed the whole mess, leaving only the little bones. These Maudlin secretly folded in a piece of silk, and depositing them under the almond tree, bedewed them with her tears.

" On a sudden the almond tree began to move, the top nodded, the boughs struck together like the clapping of hands, and the roots capered about like the feet of a merry youth in the dance. A thick cloud issued from the tree, a bright red flame appeared in this cloud, and out of the flame flew a beautiful bird, which, after having warbled a few enchanting notes, suddenly disappeared. Every thing beneath the tree remained, however, as before.

The grass waved gracefully in the wind, the leaves gently shook, but the bones had disappeared, whereat Maudlin's heart rejoiced, as she fancied that her dear little brother must be still alive. With this impression she went joyfully home. The strange bird in the meanwhile perched upon a goldsmith's house, and sang audibly

'Killed by a mother—cruel sinner!
And served up for a father's dinner,
Under an almond tree with groans,
A loving sister laid my bones.
And from those bones, but just interred,
Behold me here, a stranger bird.'

"The goldsmith was sitting in his shop making a gold chain, and, being delighted with the pretty warbler, he ran into the street, dropping in his hurry both his shoes and apron. 'Sweet bird!' said the goldsmith, 'repeat that heavenly strain.' The bird scratched his little head, and replied, 'Give me first the gold chain which you have in your hand; I will not sing for nothing.' The goldsmith instantly handed him the chain, which was of the purest gold, and the bird, having secured it in his claws,

perched himself down before the goldsmith, and sang the same words."

"The bird must have been an owl by his wisdom," exclaimed the Leuenberger, laughing, "and the goldsmith must have been a Momus by his folly."

"Silence, fool," cried Else, angrily, "take a pattern from your niece, who is sitting there as mute as a drowned whelp."

Petronella continued:—"After this the bird flew away, and perched upon a shoemaker's house; its song attracted the master, his wife, children, and journeyman, into the street. Upon the shoemaker challenging him to repeat his notes, he perched upon his head, and replied, 'If you will give me the red shoes you have just finished, I will sing, not otherwise.'

"Having received the shoes, and fastened them to his claws, he flew upon the shoemaker's shoulder, and repeated his song.

There was a mill not far off, and this mill went klipp klapp, from morning to night; twenty stone-cutters were employed in it, hewing stone, and their hammers went hick hack, in reply to the klipp klapp, of the mill. A lime tree grew before the mill, upon which the bird flew with

the chain and shoes, and sang its song so merrily, that all the workmen ceased hewing the stone, and came running out to look at the prodigy. Upon being requested to repeat his song, the bird replied, 'Give me the mill-stone which you have hewn, and I will sing again, not else.' The workmen consulted among themselves, and finally agreed to give the stone to the bird. As they were endeavouring to raise up the ponderous mass with levers, the bird flew by with the chain in its right claw, and the shoes in the left, placed the mill-stone on its neck, like a collar, and, having sung once more, flew away to its father's house, with the stone, the chain, and the shoes."

"There's dust flying about at the skirt of the wood," cried the Leuenberger, pointing towards the road, "there is fine confusion among them—our brave landlord is on his return home."

Else cast a look towards the road, and ejaculated, "God be praised; but they are still at a distance, and there will be time for our worthy guest to conclude her story."

Petronella accordingly continued:—"The father, the mother, and Maudlin were sitting at table after dinner, when the former observed, 'I

feel so well to-day, and so cheerful at heart, although I know not the reason of it.' The wife, on the contrary, declared that she felt as if a storm were gathering over the house ; while the tears started into Maudlin's eyes. The bird flew past on a sudden, and perched upon the roof. ' Ah ! said the father, I feel as happy to-day as if some lost friend were about to pay me a visit. The wife observed that it was very strange, as she felt so alarmed that her teeth chattered ; it seemed as if fire was circulating through her veins, while her temples throbbed as if about to burst. Maudlin said not a word, but her tears flowed so fast that her apron became as wet as a moistened sponge. In the meanwhile the bird was fluttering upon the almond tree, and sung—

' Killed by a mother—cruel sinner ! '

" The wife stopped her ears and closed her eyes, in order that she might neither hear nor see. Yet she heard a roaring in her ears like cataracts, rushing down a mountain, while continued flashes of lightning passed ominously before her.

' And served up for a father's dinner.' ..

continued the bird, and although the song had the effect of a funeral bell upon the mother's ears, the father thought that angels were singing before him to golden harps; at the same time a sweet odour of rosemary proceeded from the top of the tree, and scented the room.

‘Under an almond tree with groans,’

the bird continued, when Maudlin was obliged to bury her head between her knees in order to conceal her grief. The father, who could no longer contain himself, rose to go out. His wife pulled him by the sleeve, crying in a faltering voice, ‘Do not go—leave me not here to perish!—is not the house already tottering and in flames?’

“The husband paid no attention to his wife's agony, but kept his eye upon the beautiful warbler, which still sung—

‘A loving sister laid my bones.
And from those bones, but just interred,
Behold me here, a stranger bird.’

“As it concluded, it dropped the golden chain about the neck of the father, so that he looked like a knight decorated with some distinguished

order. He returned, overwhelmed with joy, into the house, and showed his wife the splendid ornament. The sinful woman trembled as the bird began his song anew, and it appeared as if a thousand tongues re-echoed his voice:—

‘Killed by a mother—cruel sinner!’

“‘Oh, that I were a hundred fathoms under the earth!’ she exclaimed, ‘that I might never more hear what that ghost upon the tree is croaking!’

“The bird now sang—

‘A loving sister laid my bones,’

and the girl could not avoid going out to look at the lovely creature, which immediately threw the red shoes at her feet, in which she danced merrily back into the room. The bird now began warbling beautiful notes in the air, and ceased not repeating his song, so that the wicked mother’s hair stood on end like hissing snakes. ‘Oh!’ she exclaimed, in despair, ‘Is not the world then at an end? Will the boy never cease crying? I must go out to him, although it should cost me my life!’ She

rushed out, when down fell the stone, with a thundering crash, from the almond tree, and buried her a hundred fathoms deep in the earth, out of which it could never more be raised. Smoke and fire issued from the spot. The husband and Maudlin wrung their hands. When the smoke, however, was dissipated, and the flames were extinguished, the appearances beneath the almond tree were the same as before; the grass waved in the wind, the leaves rustled softly, and the little brother stood up before his father and sister, white as snow, red as blood, and lively as a fawn. 'Good morrow to you, my beloved,' said he, 'how rejoiced am I to be again among you.' They now sat down at table, and so ends my tale."

"Blow the horn, thou lazy knave!" cried Veit aloud to the deaf sentinel, who was groping about in search of the instrument, when the horsemen thundered at the outer ditch.

"It is truly my husband!" said Else, while the horn was sounding. "God and all the saints be praised!" Scarcely however had she uttered her words of thanksgiving, than she observed, with alarm, that Wallrade had slipped off the

stone bench, and was lying upon the ground like a corpse. She hastened to her assistance. Veit smiled maliciously. "Only see," said he, "how the wench, who has generally a bosom as stubborn as steel, is overpowered by a child's story;" and then hastened down to open the gate to the party, who had returned indeed in good condition, but with woeful countenances. Bechtram rode on a servant's mare, while his own horse was led hobbling after him. "We've had but poor luck," exclaimed he to the Leuenberger; "in God's name do tell me what ails my stallion? The buck-legged mare tilted me into the mud just as I was about to spur her cursed tricks out of her, and this put an end to our excursion, for let Satan try his luck when his own horse throws him. 'Tis a sorry omen."

"We have plenty of sorry omens," exclaimed the Hornberger; "the first person we met with was an old hag with a white beard and a wart upon her chin."

"By all the stars!" exclaimed Bechtram, "somebody or something must be in fault. Who knows, Leuenberger, if your aunt has not

bewitched the animal and given him the staggers ? ”

All burst out into a loud laugh, except Doring the Reifenberger, and Henne von Wiede, who were of opinion that nothing less than sorcery could have caused the buck-legged mare to throw her master, and his stallion to have the staggers. “Those canting hypocrites with the shaven crowns,” said they, “understand all kinds of witchcraft as well as saying mass, and would make even Satan’s horns as blunt as their own wits.”

“If it be so, a remedy may be found,” said Bechtram; “there is a mendicant friar in my closet; he may be liberated for a while to try his hand at conjuring a foundered horse sound. He looks as if he were profoundly learned in the science of the cabala. Let him be brought forth.”

The monk soon made his appearance. He exhibited the greatest bodily debility, being scarcely able to walk. His face was carefully concealed in his hood, through an opening of which his untrimmed beard was visible.

“Welcome, priest!—bend the knee to his

reverence, ye unsanctified knaves," said Bechtram, in derision: "Pardon me for not having found leisure, amidst the imperative duties of my calling, to hold saving communion with one of the righteous. I hope, however, that neither you, nor the secular who attended you hither, have lacked any thing needful for the body; your souls require no feeding, as they must be filled with the unction of holiness."

"Poor devil!" said Doring, taking some compassion on him; "Dame Else, who is a rare housewife—bless her hard heart! has only provided him with dry bread and pure water!"

Bechtram scowled upon the speaker, and replied, with indifference, "every one, my friend, is maintained in this castle according to my will; and I seek not your sanction for the regulation of my household. Monks and boors should not be pampered. The former preach mortification, and should, therefore, practise what they preach. The latter not being accustomed to high feeding, their stomachs are best satisfied with the coarsest. This holy man is, no doubt, better pleased with black bread and pure water than with seasoned venison and hot wine. I would however, honoured

father," he continued, turning to the friar, "entertain you with somewhat better fare, if you would only, by your blessing, set to rights this horse of mine, which is bewitched in the hind leg."

The monk, who had not hitherto uttered a word, coolly replied, "I am unable to do what you desire."

Bechtram was not satisfied with this answer. "Mere evasion!" said he, smiling, "you gentlemen of the cloister generally promise more than you can perform, and modesty is not a commodity with which you are overburthened. Reserve, therefore, what you have for those who are to be fooled by it—you will do no good by playing it off here. Once again, make my horse sound, and you shall have your reward. I value him far above a man's life; and in proportion as I value him shall I estimate his preserver."

"I repeat," answered the monk, in his former tone, "I am unable to do your bidding."

The perspiration started from Bechtram's forehead, while the Hornberger roared out, with a savage oath, "What! you a priest, and cannot cure a bewitched horse? Thou fattener

of hungry souls! has the devil hired thee only to do his own work? Dost thou pretend to restore a man's diseased soul, when thou can'st not cure a horse's lame leg? Do you not observe, Bechtram, that this dirty, barefooted friar, rejoices in your courser's calamity? Priests are your sworn enemies. Let this fellow feel the scourge, and he will soon cry peccavi. By our holy Mother, I never stand upon ceremony with such sanctified rascals."

"I have not lived sixty years," replied Bechtram, surlily, "to be taught by a — but no matter—I will allow you, my lord of Hornberg, to teach me when your own beard is become gray. Let me alone. This is not the first obstinate friar I have had to deal with."

The Hornberger's feelings were hurt at being thus reproved, and a warm altercation arose between him and Bechtram, during which the monk inspected the lame stallion, with the eye of one skilled in veterinary art. All were astonished at the intrepidity which he displayed in handling the restive animal. He had just concluded his examination, when, at the inter-

cession of their mutual friends, peace was restored between Bechtram and the Hornberger.

"May I be forced to fatten on my own gall if I think any more of this quarrel," said the boisterous Hornberger, falling upon old Bechtram's neck; "but," added he, "since two brave noblemen have disagreed about such a piece of living carrion as this (pointing to the monk), the scoundrel shall give us both satisfaction, by conjuring the foul fiend out of this noble roadster upon the spot. If he fail, let him look to his bones."

"Right," replied Bechtram; and turning towards the monk, "prepare," said he, "thou cankered branch of the priesthood, to cure my horse without further delay. Let it be done before the bright sun sinks behind the forest, or thou shalt have reason to curse the hour that thy mother dropped thee naked and hungry into a scurvy world."

The monk remained unmoved,—“I am neither skilled in, nor is the horse under, the influence of witchcraft,” said he; “his disease is a wind-gall. If it be your pleasure, I will this night prepare a medicament which shall effect

a radical cure by the morning; but believe me, I am no sorcerer."

The noble highwaymen expressed their incredulity. When, however, the monk, raising the horse's hoof, shewed them a dark red spot, which had escaped their unpractised eyes, upon touching which the animal reared and plunged as if in extreme agony, they seemed with one accord to think that the holy father, despised by them as an unholy friar, might be in the right; and their scorn was soon converted into rude courtesy.

"Most revered father, thou art a monk after my own heart!" exclaimed Bechtram, with animation; "when I am emperor I will make thee a cardinal, or I shall deserve to have the most holy Roman sceptre cracked about my ears. Thou one of the fraternity of soul-jobbers? why man, thou art better fit to send a soul to hell than to heaven. The noble art of which thou art such a rare master, was never learnt in a cloister, where the nearest likeness to a horse, after the abbot's mule, is the ass his master. What can I do to gladden thy heart? Thou shalt eat, drink, and be merry. I cannot, how-

ever suffer thee to go at large for the present, because 'tis prudent to detain thee."

"I know not," replied the monk, "how it can be prudent to continue the oppression which that young jailor (pointing to Veit) has practised upon me and my poor driver. The weakest, however, must submit to the strongest. If I cure your horse by the time I have stated, let me implore you, as a small return, to ease the sufferings of the peasant who is confined with me in this castle. He has a wife and five children at home, who cannot even guess at what is become of him; and who are, perhaps, at this very moment pining in want, while he is hid from their eyes, a prey to sorrow and despair. Treat him not worse than your mastiffs, who never partake of so loathesome a meal as musty rye bread and muddy water. In one word, treat the unfortunate creature like a man, and you will amply repay me for the trifling service which I am about to render you."

Bechtram began to feel a something like remorse, but his *noble* associates, on the contrary, expressed their surprise at the monk's presumption. "This is a saint, with a vengeance,"

said the Hornberger, with a sneer. "If you had but seen him on the journey hither, you would have sworn the fellow had left his tongue among the Turks. He never condescended—the spiritual hypocrite—to spend one word upon us. Now is he become a special pleader, and chatters like a gifted starling. The gentle aunt of my worthy friend, the Leuenberger, could not coax from him even a wag of the jaws, and she's honey for any man's jar. Now the rogue's tongue goes like a water-wheel, which never ceases turning till the dam's dry."

"People should speak only at the proper time," rejoined the monk, mildly.

"Let people then speak for themselves, and not for others," added Bechtram, good-humouredly. "By heaven, it would have better pleased me, had you craved a good boon for yourself, than a piece of meat for a vile peasant."

"I wear the garment of humility," replied the monk, "and my garb is a symbol of my actions. I ask nothing for myself; but this does not prevent your doing me a kindness. For this day I desire not to be molested, and to

be allowed now to return to my prison to prepare the ointment."

Bechtram would not allow him to return to his confinement. "Come with me," said he. "A few glasses of generous wine will recruit you, and you shall be regaled with a prime piece of savoury venison."

"I care not for the bread that perishes," replied the monk; "my companion, the poor peasant in the tower, will miss my company. The consolation which I have afforded him has hitherto enabled him to sleep in peace upon his straw."

"Psha!" exclaimed the Leuenberger. "What have such fellows to do with consolation?"

"They need no better company," added the Hornberger, "than rats and spiders."

"I will send the man a goblet of wine," said Bechtram, "to make himself merry withal. But, by the honour of knighthood, holy father, you must follow me without delay."

The knight drew the friar's arm within his own, and proceeded, followed by his companions, to the lattice-gate, where dame Else met them, and welcomed her lord. "Where is the fair maiden?" inquired Bechtram, sharply,

while the question was repeated from every lip. Dame Else replied, that "a slight indisposition confined her to her chamber, but that a short repose would recruit her, when she would descend among them." She then conducted them into the apartment on the first floor, where they found the oak table covered with dishes, while their grim faces were reflected in the polished pewter tankards. The guests attacked dame Else's good cheer like hungry wolves, and washed it down with bumpers of good old Rhenish. All were as merry as friars at a carnival. When the repast was over, Doring and Weide amused themselves at dice; the Reifenberger recited a few rhymes in honour of Petronella; the hoarse Hornberger hummed two or three staves of a drinking song, while Bechtram, the Leuenberger, and the monk, discoursed upon hunting and falconry, sports with which the latter was so well acquainted, that he imparted considerable information, even to those practised sportsmen. It was not long before the effects of the wine were visible, both upon Veit and Bechtram, and a dispute soon arose between them upon game and forest laws, in which the whole party very shortly joined.

Petronella took no part in the contest, and looked around in vain for Else, who had left the room. She at last made up to the priest, who, however, did not appear to be much flattered by her intention, for he suddenly rose up, and quitted the chamber.

In an adjoining apartment the burning fuel was crackling under the pot, in which was a copious mixture of water, wine, and spice, and the monk was standing over it with his arms folded, and his eyes fixed on vacancy, when he suddenly felt his hand seized, and, on looking round, perceived that dame Else was at his side. She kissed his garment. Upon the monk expressing his surprise at her humility, she said in a penitential tone, "although we are now in outlawry at Neufalkenstein, we are, nevertheless, baptized Christians, and neither Jews nor heathens, who feel a pleasure in seeing the Lord's anointed pining in misery and want. It grieves me to think that my husband has been obliged to detain you a prisoner for his own security; and that I dared not entertain you better than I have hitherto done; but as my lord, who, believe me, is no less my master, orders, so must I do—'twould be as

much as my life is worth to disobey him—pardon me, therefore——”

“Have I been angry with you, woman?” asked the monk, coldly. “No, truly,” replied Else; “and that makes me the more bold to beseech you to do a little service to a poor maiden who has fallen into disgrace with herself and her God.”

“What do you mean? Do you speak of yourself?”

“Not of myself, exactly, holy father!” replied the dame. “I am outlawed for my husband’s sins, and dare ask nothing of the church until we are absolved; but there is in this castle a maiden who desires to confess her evil-doings, and receive the consolation of the holy Eucharist. Be pleased, therefore, to comply with her wishes. Here is the key of the chapel, for I dare not conduct you into the chamber of the mourner, since it might be observed by the men, and my husband’s fury would rage like a whirlwind; because, being outlawed, he cannot endure any thing ordained by the church. Go to the sanctuary, and I will send the maiden to you. Bestow upon her a *benedicite*, and endue her with the Lord’s blessing.”

The priest was visibly disquieted during this explanation. He refused the old dame's request with a certain warmth of manner which he had not hitherto exhibited ; assigning as a reason for his refusal, that the inmates of the castle were under excommunication. In answer to this, dame Else observed, that as the fair stranger was not an outlaw, the father could not act against his conscience by doing what was required of him. " You members of a spiritual community," she added, sternly, " would not hesitate to confess old Lucifer himself, if he would put down his fee. You'd sell your souls for money. I shall not, however, bribe you to do your duty. Refuse me at your peril ! Here is the key of the chapel," she added, loosening it from a large bunch which hung at her girdle. " There is a lantern ; but you must be careful, as the sacred edifice is stored with combustibles, though there is room enough for a confessional. Go !—do you hear ? I must be obeyed. The maiden shall attend you instantly. Attempt not, however, to escape with her ; for, though old, my eyes are sharp, and it is no easy matter to elude dame Else."

So saying, she turned her back upon the

monk, without awaiting his reply, and proceeded towards the room whence issued the roaring of the revellers, which almost shook the venerable walls of Bechtram's castle.—“Wait a moment! wait! ye drunkards!” vociferated the sturdy hostess, as she entered the chamber, armed with a broom; “I will make you quiet, when it is time to be at rest. You shall beg for it, before you get another drop of wine.” Having by her loud reproaches in some measure restored tranquillity, she betook herself to her chamber in the upper story.

The monk, in the meanwhile, lighted his lantern at the flame on the hearth, took the medicament which he had been preparing off the burning coals, and cast his eyes fervently towards heaven. “Can it be a sin, then,” said he, mentally, “to do what is required of me? No! the law of necessity is paramount to all others. Besides, there is in the hands of robbers a maiden, who seeks consolation through my means—reconciliation with her conscience and her God. Probably, too, she is a captive, like myself; the same, perhaps, on whose account I and the peasant are detained,

although we have not once heard her name pronounced. Can I, however, afford her consolation, who am myself so much in need of it? Let us see!"

He seized the lantern and the key, glided down the wooden stair, and crossing the narrow court, reached the chapel, the low gate of which was marked with a large cross, and scantily shaded by a half withered elder-tree. After answering the challenge of the sentinel, he entered the chapel without further interruption. Every thing was in strange confusion, stools and communion-benches covered with dust, and cobwebs were heaped up in one corner. Half the building was filled with bundles of hay, straw, and bags of dried leaves. The wooden steps of the altar were shivered to pieces, and the altar itself was cast upon the desecrated floor of God's temple. The image of the blessed virgin was, indeed, visible, but so mutilated, as to appear rather the representation of some unhallowed monster, while a few withered flowers, which had once been formed into a garland by some pious hand, were still hanging from the shattered image. The monk had not much leisure to take a survey of

all the strange objects which surrounded him; he soon heard footsteps approaching, and had scarcely time to enter the confessional, which had been made a receptacle for old saddle-covers, when the gate was gently opened, and again as gently closed.

Wallrade, clothed in coarse garments, with a dark veil over her face, now advanced, and bowing in solemn reverence to the monk, threw herself upon the steps of the altar. Tears, to which her eyes had long been strangers, now flowed fast down her faded cheeks. Her lips moved in prayer, but her heart heaved with the fierce throes of remorse. She was violently agitated, and her tempestuous supplications rose up to heaven like the foam of the troubled ocean when borne upon the wings of the whirlwind. "Lord of the universe!" said Wallrade aloud, while her voice trembled with emotion, "by what wonderful means has my heart been this day strengthened? Hast thou addressed me by the lips of that wretched old woman who is so sadly preparing her soul for eternal wailing? Tell me if thou hast done so, or if it be the spirit of delusion alone which has overpowered me, and made me weaker than a helpless child!

Ah! how this word appals me! and why? Whence is it that the nursery tale of a mother's cruelty, and a son's sufferings, has had such a terrifying influence over me, that I—Alas! who is there to assist me out of this labyrinth in which I find myself entangled—to tell me whether I do right in following the dictates of my affrighted conscience, and making at once a full confession of my iniquities? Oh! they are more in number than I am able to express! Wicked hesitation! Accursed dread of the spectres of my own imagination! I have not committed murder! What shall I then confess? God protect my reason!”

She raised herself, and with a firm step approached the confessional: the priest was leaning on one side of the sacred chair, while the lamp was burning at his feet. She threw back her veil, and was about to bend her knee before the confessor, when a deep groan burst from the lips of the holy man. Wallrade, alarmed, but with her habitual energy, seized the lamp, and holding it to the pale face of the monk, was struck dumb with terror; for in that countenance she recognized one whom, above all others, she dreaded and abhorred. The monk's

eyes glared upon her with an expression that confounded and appalled her. He seized her cold hand, and snatching from her trembling fingers the lamp, which she was about to drop, stammered out, while his countenance was convulsed with agony:—"Great God! is it thus we meet? Dost thou know me? Speak." Wallrade silently bent her head, but spoke not—her throat swelled—her breast heaved—her breath came fast and thick—a dizziness overcame her—her senses faded, and she fell insensible into the arms of the mysterious stranger.

CHAPTER XI.

"Do you know me, Wallrade?" asked the monk, in a tone of anguish, when, having recovered her consciousness, with a glance of fierce disdain she disengaged herself from his arms.

"Why should I not know thee, Rudolph?" she replied. "This is not the first time I have found thee in the garb of hypocrisy. Fraud and falsehood should be the supporters of thy escutcheon. What art thou seeking here? What could have brought thee into this den of robbers?"

"Woman!" rejoined Von der Rhön, whose pale cheeks became flushed with the deep hue of indignation at the contumelious manner in which he had been addressed, "Woman! behold to what you have reduced me. Have I then so grossly sinned that I am doomed to

wander over the earth like another Cain, with the brand of infamy upon my brow? You have driven me from my home, and from all that was dear to me. Too proud to submit to the scoffs of a pitiless world, and too weak to encounter that ignominious death which a word from your lips might bring upon me, I determined to blot my name from the records of men. I therefore threw aside every thing which denoted my better extraction, and determined to forget that I had once taken my seat at the table of a prince. Clothed in the garb of humility, I wandered as a pilgrim towards Switzerland; but I found not, even at the foot of God's altar, an indemnity for what I had left behind me. My spirit, however, by struggling with its miseries, became finally fortified to endurance, and in spite of your dreadful menaces, I returned to the dwelling of those I loved. What were my agonies, however, when I found this once lovely abode of domestic joy a scene of desolation, the great tie which bound me to existence at once snapped, and all the fair blossoms of hope annihilated by your inhuman hand! Why that scornful smile?

You know not the bitterness of these feelings. Never have you attached yourself to one heart upon earth. Whither shall I now bend my steps? Whither shall I fly? To me the whole world is a wilderness, and I am an out-cast from among the sons of men. Wallrade, you were the evil spirit who cast a blight upon my happiness. You sent me forth a wanderer from my paradise. After I had left my home, I learnt at Costnitz that you had returned to your own family on the borders of Thuringen, accompanied by a woman and her child. This was a new shock—my wife and infant in the fangs of their deadliest foe, to be the silent witnesses of her most cruel triumph over me! Perceiving by what malice you were actuated, I resolved immediately upon releasing these dear objects from your tyranny. Impelled by this determination, I trod once more upon that hated threshold, whence I may date all the miseries of my existence.”

“To the point,” said Wallrade, interrupting him; “you mean the house in which you sought for your mistress and her bastard.”

“Wallrade!” exclaimed Von der Rhön.

"cease to persecute me. Since the past cannot be recalled, let us improve the future, and let a sincere reconciliation be the consequence of our mutual captivity."

"You must think as highly of yourself as you think humbly of me," said she, contemptuously, "if you suppose that my hatred can really never find a limit. I have, indeed, threatened you with my everlasting 'abhorrence, but my heart is moved at the dejection and misery in which I now behold you sunk. I ask myself, with astonishment, is this the man whom I once loved? Is this the man who overcame every obstacle in order to become mine? Let me pass over the period when you would have converted into a demon her whom you had before considered to be the angel of your paradise. A prey to jealousy, you deserted me and your child, in order to become the husband of another. Had I really been so malicious as you represented me, I should then have made our nuptials known, and exposed you and your concubine to everlasting shame. This I did not do; but who will condemn me that I refused to suffer near me the person to whom I owe all the misery I have endured?"

"Have I suffered less?" asked Bilger, in reply. "Let me entreat you, who would magnify my venial errors into unpardonable sins, to remember your German relation. I need say no more! Our alliance was completed by his assistance, and his hand held our child at the baptismal font. It was he who poisoned my happiness, and induced you to become a scorpion in my path. Involved in a detestable connexion, which it appeared to me no longer honourable to make public—linked to a woman whom I had learned to hate, and who hated me—a man, who, under the sacred name of friendship, exercising an uncontrolled power over you and my child—in short, a prospect of the most repelling futurity—such was the position in which I stood, when the bright sunshine of hope dashed from my darkened path the dim shadows of despair, and opened a vista upon the track of time, where all was harmony and joy. I beheld a woman, the concentration of every virtue and the antithesis of every vice; at beholding whose attractions, I became insensible to the dangerous ascendancy even of your charms. A false shame, which withheld me from acknowledging to her father what had oc-

curred—the distressing conviction that I should find only misery by continuing my intercourse with you—the consciousness that I was beloved by a being so amiable and lovely as my Catharine—all concurred to drive me to the commission of an act, which, though a violation of the law, was not a violation of my conscience.”

“To show you that I am not the creature you have represented me,” replied Wallrade, “I forgive you for the calumnies which you have heaped upon me. Your peril turns your brain. You are standing upon the edge of a precipice, and would seize at a straw to prevent your plunging into the abyss. You are as unworthy of my hatred as of my love. I now leave you to your infamy. May you live a prey to increasing remorse, and die despairing !”

She turned from him, and was about to retire, when Bilger exclaimed, while the scalding tears rolled over his cheeks, “Oh, Wallrade! do not quit me thus, in this lone and bitter hour. Be not like the serpent which, at one moment, coils fondly round the hand that fosters it, and wounds it mortally the next. Tell me, where is my Catharine? where my Agnes?”

“I might have left them,” she replied, “to

pine in misery, but I would not; I might have suffered them to perish in the streets, but I could not; I might have exposed them to the scorn of the world, but I did not. In their affliction they were not deserted. She was their best friend, who had ample cause to be their worst foe. I wished to take them to Baldergrun, and was pleased with the reflection of doing them a kindness. But if you wish to learn further about them——”

“Speak out!” cried Bilger, impatiently; “this hesitation distracts me.”

“Well then, to break your suspense at once,” said Wallrade, “Catharine and her child are dead.”

“Dead!” echoed the verderer, staggering against the confessional.

“We must all die,” replied the unfeeling woman. Bilger gasped—his face became livid with agony. Wallrade continued: “As I told you, I did my best to abate the anguish of your sorrowing Catharine, but she would not be consoled, and to end her misery, flung herself with her child into the Maine.”

Von der Rhön sank upon the broken steps of the altar. “Into the Maine!” he murmured.

"Great God! into the Maine! Oh, that I were now a stiffened corpse at the bottom of that treacherous river! She was my only love—I never loved but her. She was the pearl without price in the casket of my destiny, and is gone to the coral caves beneath the remorseless waters. She was too precious a jewel for so vile a world as this, and so great a wretch as I am."

"Leave me," said Wallrade, impatiently, "thou art mad."

"Not before you have conducted me to my wife's grave!" said Bilger, vehemently. "Murderess! tell me where she rests—tell me where rests my child?"

"Spare your reviling, it will not recal her. You have been her murderer, not I. You robbed her of her innocence, and having lost that jewel, she scorned to retain what was worthless, but, like a wise woman, flung it to the lobsters. If you want to find where her polluted body lies,—seek it among the depths of the ocean."

"Shall I not even see their grave?" asked Bilger, casting his eyes wildly round, as if Wallrade's taunts had fallen unheard upon his ear. "Though a wanderer upon the highway of the world, I had still the consolation of reflecting

that two innocent hearts were beating with affection towards me—but they have ceased to throb, and I am indeed desolate. Wretch that I am! and thou, cruel monster, we have murdered the only angels that ever dwelt upon earth. My Catharine, my Agnes, am I indeed never to behold ye more?"

"Remember," said Wallrade, with a bitter smile, "that you are mourning for a guilty woman and her offspring, which is the fruit of unholy intercourse, while you abhor your injured wife, and abandon her son, the fruit of lawful love!"

"Fiend!" exclaimed the verderer, deeply moved, "did you not tear him from me, and send him to a distance, where I might no more behold him? It was you that separated the father from his son."

"Because I would not that my child should be a father's bane, I removed him from your sight; because I would not that he should behold his father's baseness and his mother's wrongs, which I determined to conceal from him until he should be old enough to become my avenger."

"Monster!" exclaimed Bilger, with an ex-

pression of horror, "the blood of a she-wolf must circulate through thy inhuman veins! Where is the boy?"

"I know not," replied Wallrade, coolly; "he has been stolen from me."

"Stolen!" repeated the verderer, "stolen? say murdered rather—he too, alas! is dead!"

"Am I suspected as the destroyer of my own child? Suspicion betrays the guilty soul—the villain thinks that all are villains around him. I tell thee sooth, the boy is stolen. I at first suspected thee, but have now discovered where he is, and will demand him as soon as I regain my freedom."

"Where is he?" asked Bilger, impatiently; "the sight of this child can alone restore me to tranquillity! Oh, if I may not even call him mine, still let me once more fold him in a father's embrace, and I will then gladly sink into my grave."

"In truth I pity you," said Wallrade, sarcastically, "but the boy's residence you will not learn from me. If you were to know his retreat, you might rob me of him, before I could free myself from this odious bondage."

"Alas! why am I so impotent that I cannot

burst your bonds?" exclaimed Bilger, despairingly; "then I might behold and embrace my son."

"Cunning often succeeds better than strength," observed Wallrade; "nothing should be above the wit of a friar, and so long as you wear his hood, you ought to possess his wit. Stratagem has toppled down towers, when the assaults of armies have failed. Would you show that affection for your son which you have denied to his mother, endeavour to liberate her. Procure me my liberty, and I promise you shall embrace him. I will, moreover, then consign the past to oblivion, and probably I may do more. But hark! the clock in the adjoining village strikes the eleventh hour, and, if I am not mistaken, I hear the approach of my gaoler."

She now hastily quitted the bewildered man, who still remained upon the steps of the altar. Dame Else met her in the court. "Alack!" said the duenna, trimming her lamp, "this confessing has been a tedious business, I thought 'twould never have come to an end. I began to be alarmed, lest you might have flown away with the priest. Well, well, when people do confess, they should do it properly. I dare say

you'd as many sins as your heart would hold, so that it took a long time to get rid of the burden ; I would be shrived too, but this the laws deny me. I'm a good Christian, though Bechtram's wife ; and if he were not constantly under excommunication, I should be a very regular churchgoer. But come, I have sent all the drunkards to bed, so the way to our apartment is now clear and easy." While Wallrade was crossing the court, Else, finding the door of the chapel open, cried out, " Come, sir priest, you must be weary, and I have prepared a bed for you on the glowing hearth, in which you may sleep like an emperor." Von der Rhön advanced towards the hostess, who was startled at the sight of his corpse-like countenance. " In heaven's name," said she, recoiling from him in dismay, " what has happened to you ? Why you look for all the world as if you had just stepped out of your grave, and exchanged the shroud for a friar's cassock."

The pretended monk made no reply, but proceeded towards the door of the cell where he had been hitherto confined ; when Else pulled him by the sleeve, and said, " What have you been doing, holy father ? Aye, I

see what it is, you are weary of being our guest, but you shall henceforth have no cause to grieve. Come, it is warm and cheerful in the hall; there you will find rest upon a comfortable heather bed, and forget the ills you have hitherto suffered. You shall have no more rye-bread, take dame Else's word for it.

She locked the chapel-door, and conducted the wretched man into the house with greater courtesy than might have been expected from the wife of a heartless brigand. Wallrade flew up the stairs; Bilger, overcome by his mental agonies, sank down upon the miserable bed which the compassionate dame had prepared for him upon the hearth. The intelligence of his beloved wife and child's death—the uncertainty of his son's fate, whom he had resigned to Wallrade, with the greatest reluctance, in order that she might keep his secret—stretched him upon the rack of agony, while the reflection that he must first liberate the mother before he should learn his child's retreat, chased sleep from his uneasy pillow; and when at length, exhausted by his painful vigil and the severe conflicts of emotion, slumber was about to seal his eyelids, his bed was sur-

rounded by the boisterous inmates of the castle, who aroused him with their coarse gibes, and broke the welcome spell which was beginning to steal over his senses.

"Arise, master of witchcraft!" exclaimed the Hornberger, whose blood-shot eyes bore witness to the preceding day's debauch.

"To work, thou scurvy priest; hast thou forgotten thy promise? If our worthy host's stallion continues halt after sunrise, I wouldn't give one of his old shoes for thy gross carcass."

"What became of you last night, while the bowl was draining?" asked Bechtram, who assisted Von der Rhön in rising from his bed.

"I'll gage aunt Petronella's tongue against the monk's ears," said the Leuenberger, laughing, "that he was as drunk as a blind beggar on a fast. His reverence was not used to mine host's prime rock-wine, and when he went to prepare his balsam, he took his heels for his head, and clapped them on the pillow here for a night's lodging."

"Come, gentlemen," said Bilger, "let us now to the stable, and you shall see whether I have been as good as my word."

As soon as the party entered, the horse

pricked up his ears, and pawing the ground with his hoof, showed that he was as sound as ever. He was trotted round the yard, when all at once admitted the cure to be complete. Bechtram shouted for joy, and grasped the hand of the fictitious friar.

"I thank thee, master Hoodsman. I will prove my gratitude the first opportunity. In the meanwhile, I have ordered my dame to see that you are well catered for."

Von de Rhön bowed his head, and retired.

"This is a comical companion of ours," said the Hornberger. "What is his name?"

"What does a priest want with a name?" exclaimed the Leuenberger. His hood's his badge—what other distinction does he require? Old Lucifer knows him well enough without a better name than friar."

"Are you really in earnest about going to Franckfort?" said Doring to Bechtram. "I warn you not to trust those wily shopkeepers."

"I confide in the Franckforters," replied Bechtram, smiling; "and am wiser than they would be if they were to confide in me. I find my account in an annual quarrel and reconciliation with the good people of that city. When

their roads are covered with supplies of grain, meat, and wine, which I shortly suspect they will be, I, who for a considerable period was their town-captain, will lull them into security, and replenish my stores from their Exchequer. Von Bilbel is too old a fox to be easily trapped, and the Franckforters stand in awe of him, my word for it." .

"And if they did not," exclaimed the Hornberger, "in spite of *my* kind feelings towards your fair captive, I'd strike off all that she carries above her shoulders, and send it to her townsfolk as a beautiful death's head, if they dared to offend our noble host."

"The pitiful braggart!" whispered the Leuenberger to von Wiede. "I would advise him, however, to let the young lady's head alone."

"Plague and pestilence!" rejoined the Hornberger, who had heard him; "who says that? Veit! Put a bridle on your tongue, craven; for no man ever called Von Hornberg a braggart twice!"

"Shame on thee, gross Leuenberger," roared Bechtram, interposing. "I have long observed thee paying thy court to the fair lass of Franckfort. Why, man, art thou going to play the

fool, when thy years should remind thee, that 'tis time to grow wise? How it sickens me to see a fellow in love, whose gums have lost their grinders, and whose eyes are beginning to flatten. 'Tis worse than sour porridge to my stomach to see a coarse meoncalf purring over a wench, and whining sonnets to her shoe-tie, when his forehead is beginning to wrinkle, and his glass must remind him of a baboon."

A loud laugh followed this coarse reproof; but Veit's countenance lowered, and the tremor of his lip showed that he was severely stung.

Bechtram, finding that he had the majority on his side, continued his unmerciful attack. "The Hornberger," said he, "is a different man from you, friend Veit. He is a merrier companion—a truer friend—and let me say too, has a much more daring spirit than thou hast; whilst thou art sneaking about in that tawny skin of thine, and opening thy mouth like a young raven, as if the skies would drop food into thy voracious maw, the Hornberger is manfully bestriding his gallant steed, and is as much dreaded in the Watteren as I was in my best days.—A word in thine ear, my lusty Leuenberger—courage is the key which unlocks

the heart of woman. Women hate cowards as they do spiders. Take this from a friend—and chew the cud upon't."

"By the mass!" cried Veit, "no one can gainsay your candour. You're as frank as a friend need be." The dispute between the Hornberger and Veit was now renewed, in consequence of Bechtram's interference, and the Leuenberger was about to draw his dagger, when the old knight rushing between the disputants, exclaimed—"Peace, varlets! you prevented me yesterday from fighting, although I am the master of the house, and I will retaliate, by preventing you from a similar amusement to-day. Come, you shall each crack a bottle instead of cracking a crown. Let us drown all animosity in a social bumper." He then clapped his hands; and, upon dame Else putting her head out at the window, demanded his farewell glass. "I am in such a joyful mood, that I have made up my mind for a happy day. I must now say, adieu!—Tomorrow, at furthest, we shall meet again." The whole party, the surly Leuenberger not excepted, gave him their hands. Doring, however, shook his head and said—"I forebode

no good, Bechtram, from the road you are about to take. Your horse gave us an evil omen yesterday. He either threatens you with mischief at Franckfort, or you will bring it with you from thence. Take my council—remain at home—”

“What idle babbling!” rejoined Bechtram, smiling, and pulling him by the whiskers.—“Give yourself no concern—no evil will happen to me. Old Bechtram is the terror of the wood, and even if the townsmen did not fear me, they dread my numerous and brave associates. You will not suffer me to fall into mischief; and, with this confidence in you, let us empty our glasses to a merry meeting, and soon.”

Dame Else poured out the wine, and the emptied flasks quickly flew into the air with many a loud huzza! “Not a drop more!” exclaimed the Reifenberger. “We will have the remainder to-morrow—or this evening, perhaps,” added Henne von Wied. The Hornberger, Doring, and the whole party, proposed to wait for Bechtram at Oberrad; and Bechtram willingly consented to the escort of his friends. Von Wiede was to ride with him into Sachsenhausen, and not quit his side.

"Woe be to the town if any harm happen to thee," shouted the merry men all.

"To you," said Bechtram, turning to the Leuenberger, "I think I shall do a kindness by appointing you superintendent of the house until my return. You will then have an opportunity of consoling your dear aunt, and the elder's daughter. By the by, if Montfort fail much longer in keeping his promise, I will deliver up the wench to her father, who will no doubt readily pay me a handsome sum by way of ransom-money. Then, friend Veit, if the old man will overlook your poverty, and the pope your consanguinity, you may get a wife, and have a thorn in your ribs for the rest of your days. In the mean time, be a trusty guardian of my house."

The noble freebooters now leapt upon their steeds, and the whole party galloped off with a few attendants behind them. The Leuenberger looked after them through the window at the gate, and muttered, "a curse go with you! That vile Hornberger! I hate him from the bottom of my soul, and the old fool too held me up to ridicule, and drew the mockery of all upon me. Who does he fancy himself to

be? What has he to boast of? His property? The devil take his money, his wine, and his fine table. Had I a dozen slaves at my command, and a few such resolute associates as Doring, von der Weide, or Reifenberg, I would soon be as rich as the old rascal who owns this castle. Does he pride himself on his descent? My nobility is as ancient as his, and the emperor has long since repented of having made him a knight. Of what use are his golden spurs? It cannot be denied that he has a stout heart; but is he the first old bear that would stand baring? Had I not been afraid of odds, I would have bearded the old savage in his own lair. However, he shall remember me yet, and cry me mercy before the sod covers him. I fancy he will be disappointed in his expectations of ransom-money from old Frosch; for I know one who will forestall him, and ease the elder of his purse. The moon is this evening at the full, and I shrewdly suspect that the elder will be found upon the Bergen road to night. The money once in my hands, Wallrade must follow me, if not into her father's house, at least into mine, and I'll take good care that the Franckforters shall set fire to this

villanous hornets' nest, and burn the old rascal in his den. Good," added he, rubbing his hands, "this will be a capital hit. At one stroke I shall obtain the father's money, and the daughter's person. I shall effect old Bechtram's ruin, and the Hornberger's disgrace. Once more, success to you, renowned knights of the highway! The Leuenberger vows that he will outwit you all, and he was never yet worse than his word."

The hours passed tranquilly. The sun sank behind the forest, when the women proposed to revisit the watch-tower. While they were ascending the narrow stairs, the Leuenberger ordered his horse to be brought from the stable, and the gate to be opened. "Willpert," said he to the groom, "I shall return to-night. Tell your mistress that I have taken a ride into the country, to try my falcon. Take good care of the gate."

The servant bowed, and Veit passed over the drawbridge.

Petronella now said to Wallrade, "I am sorry you have been so out of sorts; pray was your indisposition occasioned by exposure to

the keen air on these walls, or by the little tale which I related to you?"

"Neither by the one nor the other," replied Wallrade; "it was an indisposition to which I am frequently subject, merely a dizziness in the head. You, I imagine, are no stranger to such attacks; but in you they proceed from old age and a sluggish circulation, while in me they are the consequence of a redundancy of blood, excited into more than ordinary activity by the vigour of youth."

Else smiled, but Petronella knit her brow, and turned up the point of her nose, which writhed like the snout of an elephant. "Could I reckon as many years as the Patriarch Methusaleh," said she scornfully, "I should still be young in comparison with the date of our noble ancestry: few can boast of such a remote descent."

"But there are few," replied Wallrade, sarcastically, "who would not rather be ignoble possessors of riches, than noble beggars. Illustrious Madam, what you tell me of your magnificent castle at Gelnhausen may be all very true, but if you can provide no better en-

tainment there than a parcel of idle tales, I would not give much for the dignity and antiquity of your ancestry."

A scene of mutual recrimination now ensued between these fair maidens. "Offend me not, woman," cried Wallrade, raising her arm, "or I'll—" but Petronella, nothing daunted at the menacing attitude of her young adversary, would have continued the altercation, had not Else interposed. "Shame on you," she exclaimed, to the elder party, "your years should teach you better. You are too old to wag so censorious a tongue. I advise you to keep it still, for your bold nephew, who has a kindly feeling for the lass, will not suffer her to be traduced with impunity."

"Aye, I have him in my chains," said Wallrade, with a sneer, "he has promised to win my hand, and that he can only do by liberating me from this prison. He has pledged himself to free me from my bondage."

"What!" cried the antiquated virgin, rising angrily from her seat, "would he drive *me* out of the house, in order to place a citizen's daughter in our castle? the villain! but where is he? I

will hear it, from his own lips, before I will credit such a vile calumny."

"You will learn it soon enough," resumed Wallrade, smiling scornfully, "I give you my word, however, that though a citizen's daughter, I shall take time to reflect before I encourage the addresses of a beggarly nobleman."

"And why should you not encourage them?" asked the old woman, indignantly. "A noble youth of Veit's engaging address, is always well received by women that can't tell who were their grandfathers; and upon reflection 'twould drive me mad to think that an elder's daughter should refuse a nephew of the high-born Petronella. It would be a scandal to our arms, which the Emperor Charlemagne conferred upon our ancestors, for their valorous achievements. Frosch would, no doubt, think himself highly honoured in walking arm in arm with a Leuenberg."

"You are a very great simpleton, most illustrious lady," said dame Else, with good humoured irony. "Give yourself no concern about our fair guest's escape, she has been trying what an old fool she can make of you,

Your nephew will neither marry nor liberate her, until my husband has touched her ransom. Bolts and trusty servants are our sufficient pledge for her security, even though the liberality with which we have treated her should not be. Believe me, Leuenbergeress, I place a much greater confidence in Veit's integrity, and the maiden's candour, than you do. Why, I would not hesitate an instant in asking the honest wench to fetch me a clean coif from my wardrobe, and in confiding to her my bunch of keys, that I would'nt, by the holy mass! Here child, go, take these keys and bring me the coif; I have no fear of your escape;—there, go."

Dame Else's request in her own house was always a command. Wallrade, therefore, feigned a willing obedience. She snatched the keys and flew down the stairs. Upon arriving at the gate of the prison, she started at beholding Von der Röhn, sitting with his arms folded, upon the stone bench at the chapel door. She soon however, recovered her self-possession, and passed haughtily on, towards Else's apartment. Bilger's eyes followed her until the door closed upon her, when his breast heaved a heavy

sigh. Overpowered by the recollection of his errors and of his sufferings, he was about to secrete himself in a remote corner of the court, that he might not again encounter the object at once of his dread and of his abhorrence, when a voice, not unknown to him, addressed him from the other side of the wall: "May God bless you, pious father!" Bilger had held a short conversation the previous night with a lad, on his way to the chapel, and he it was who now saluted him. "Reverend Sir," continued the youth, "I owe you much. My prayers, with your pious sanction, have refreshed me. They have ascended as a memorial to heaven, for this morning my mother appeared to me in my sleep, and desired me to quit the lawless society of which I am now an unsanctified member."

"May God direct your steps!" replied Bilger; "pray also for me."

"Ah, Sir!" continued the lad, "what is there equal to liberty! How willingly would I liberate you if it were in my power!"

In the mean time, a loud clatter was heard beyond the walls.

"What is doing without?" asked Von der Rhön.

"Here's an evil omen," replied the lad, in a loud whisper; "my master's horse is galloping homeward saddled and bridled, without his rider. The servants are dispersed in pursuit of him. Now would be the moment for your escape, if this vile postern were not in the way. The bridges are down, the gate is open, the servants are scattered, and a gray horse, newly shod, is standing at the forge."

Bilger peeped through the lattice-gate, and saw that his young friend had spoken the truth. All was clear, a single serving-lad was gaping on the drawbridge which was down, while the gray horse stood quietly grazing before the forge. The captive's breast heaved, his blood leaped, his heart bounded, and forgetful of past wrongs, he turned his animated eyes towards Wallrade, who was at this moment returning with the coif from Else's wardrobe. "Look," said he, pointing through the grated postern, "now would be the moment for our escape, if we had but the key to this gate."

Wallrade did not hesitate, but promptly selecting the key of the entrance to the castle, locked the door, thus preventing all egress. She then, without a moment's delay, applied

another key to the grated postern. A guardian angel directed her hand, for it instantly flew open. She passed through, accompanied by the verderer, and flung the bunch of keys into a bed of nettles. Von der Rhön seized the gray horse, and raising Wallrade quickly on his back, in spite of his hood and wooden shoes, sprung nimbly behind her, and was past the drawbridge, before the menial on watch, who observed him only at a distance, had time to give the alarm. This cry came too late, for both horse and riders were already among the dark recesses of the forest, when the servants, who had gone in pursuit of their master's courser, heard the shout. The horse performed the service gallantly, never once slackening his speed, until he reached a solitary vista in the forest, concealed by lofty trees and thick underwood, whence the sound of the horn from the watchtower of Neufalkenstein, could be only faintly heard. Here Wallrade, as she lay on the grass, almost breathless from exhaustion, could not refrain from giving vent to her malignant feelings, as these hollow sounds came indistinctly upon her ear. "I would give a silver mark," said she, "could I be witness to the dis-

may of those two base women, on yonder watch-tower. Oh! that I could see their withered bodies hurled from those crazy walls! What execrations Bechtram will pour out upon them at his return! I should not wonder if he were to put both the old wretches to death, for he is capable of any thing, except cutting his own throat, which he reserves for the headsman. If he were to bathe his hands in their polluted blood, how would my heart dance at the news."

"Betray not such implacable feelings," said Bälger, "at a moment when it behoves us to offer our thanksgivings to heaven, lest they chase away the guardian angel, who has hitherto protected us in our flight."

Wallrade gave him a stern look, which, however, he disregarded. "We have no time to lose," said he, hastily, "the sun is fast declining. We have still far to travel before we shall be secure from pursuit, and our horse does not promise us a very speedy journey, for he is now panting and snuffing, as if the very life was going out of him."

"Quick, then!" said Wallrade, who, roused by the possibility of being overtaken, suffered herself to be again lifted on the animal's back.

"Let us proceed with all despatch, even should the brute sink under us."

They now dashed along the road with all possible speed. Von der Rhön, occupied only with their flight, and forgetful of every thing else, encircled his companion with his right arm, while he guided the horse with his left. Wallrade found time, however, even amidst the danger which surrounded her, for some unseasonable jests. "You embrace me as tight," said she, "as if I had only just become your beloved bride, instead of your detested wife! Or, are you thinking of taking me again to yourself, now that death has removed the object of your love."

This harsh taunt pierced Bilger to the soul, and he dropped his right arm from Wallrade's waist, while the bridle fell from his left; at the same moment the poor animal stumbled over the root of a tree, and fell to the ground never to rise again. "Your unfeeling jests," exclaimed Bilger, "have brought a curse upon us, we must now trust to our feet to bear us to the end of our journey."

"Coward," replied Wallrade, contemptuously, "does that alarm you? I care not how my feet

are lacerated, so long as I escape the detested Bechtram, and the still more detested Montfort!"

"Holloa! who is mentioning my name?" exclaimed a man on horseback, scarcely a pace distant from Wallrade, who trembled with alarm, for the count's crooked figure, sitting like a ghost upon his saddle, was not to be mistaken even in the thick twilight. Bilger, struck with consternation, quitted his hold of his affrighted companion, whose countenance was blanched with terror, and at this moment Montfort, springing from his horse, seized upon the terrified maiden. "Who have we here," he exclaimed, in a tone of malignant triumph; "Is not this the virtuous damsel whom I was about to conduct to my own house? Has she indeed anticipated me? tender maiden! or has this hypocritical old friar stolen my little dove? Decamp, vile pander, or I will presently crack thy shorn crown with the pummel of my sword."

"Count Montfort," replied Bilger, undaunted by the fierce menace, "you will not dare to seize on the public highway, a person in whom I claim the right of protection."

"Away with thee, thou hooded serpent,"

rejoined Montfort, raising his naked weapon, "dare not to profane my name with thy polluted lips."

The captive now made an effort to escape, but the count held her fast, while, with his drawn sword, he kept the verderer at bay. "I hear the snorting of horses and the sound of human voices," exclaimed Wallrade, who, though half-distracted at being recaptured, was nevertheless not so lost to recollection as to forget that all would be over if she again fell into Bechtram's hands. "Our persecutors approach," she cried, "fly holy father, and save your precious life!"

"Ay, escape thou sanctified vagabond!" cried Montfort, in a thundering voice; "I have no alternative but to suffer thy escape, since I am alone and cannot secure thee."

"Fly!" repeated Wallrade, vehemently, as she pointed towards Franckfort. At this moment dame Else's hoarse voice was heard above the whistling wind. Bülger's resolution was in an instant taken, and darting with the swiftness of a stag into the forest, he was soon lost among its impenetrable recesses. The cavalcade now approached, which consisted of a party from Neufalkenstein in search of

the fugitives. Some were mounted double upon plough horses, while some were seated singly upon lean mules, which picked up a scanty subsistence from the hedges. At the head of this motley equestrian troop was dame Else, bestriding a gray mare. On her left arm she bore a small shield, and was armed with a broad wood-knife, which hung down upon her hip. From her fantastic and ferocious appearance she might have been taken for the wild witch which has been rendered so celebrated in the tales of the Brocken and of the Thuringer forest. "Halt!" she roared to her followers, upon perceiving that she had overtaken her prey; "halt! down from your cattle! Ha! Count Montfort, is it you? Holla there, boys, seize your captive, and bind her treacherous limbs with withes until the joints crack again."

"Dame Else!" exclaimed Wallrade, with indignation, "if you order me to be dealt with thus, I will this moment put an end to my existence. Misfortune, and not crime, has thrown me into your power!"

"Hear, now!" rejoined the fury, thrusting her hands into her sides, "is it no crime then,

thou base gaol-bird, to seduce my servants and to betray my confidence ? ”

“ You are not worthy of a reply,” resumed Wallrade, sullenly, “ but as sure as there is a God in heaven I will destroy myself if you illtreat me.”

After Else had discharged some further abuse upon the prisoner, in which she accused her of having seduced the Leuenberger from his fidelity, and liberated the monk, the count assisted his captive into the saddle of his own horse, when the whole group retraced their steps in silence in Bechtram's castle. The gates were immediately thrown open at their approach, and, as they were passing over the drawbridge, both Wallrade and the count were seized with horror, and even the unfeeling attendants crossed themselves as they beheld two bodies hanging at the gate-posts. The porter, who had not prevented the monk and his fair companion's flight, and the old smith, who had left the horse at the forge, had both thus expiated their crimes by order of their inhuman mistress. “ View yourself in these looking-glasses ! ” said Else, dryly, to Wallrade, “ all who shall dare to enter into

league with you, will be served after this fashion, even though I should be obliged to hang up the last of them with my own fingers. These keys, however (exhibiting the recovered bunch), I will never trust again into treacherous hands. You do not appear to have calculated that the warder of yonder tower keeps a hatchet which can open a castle door without keys. Henceforth, my fairy, you will remain a close prisoner under dame Else's watchful eye, until my husband has communicated with the count and decided your doom."

The interior of the castle was now barricaded, as if it were in a state of siege. Else entertained her noble guest in the *banqueting* room, and Wallrade, overpowered with shame and mortification, but still not without hope of making her escape, re-entered the apartment, which, a few hours before, she had left as she thought for ever; and in which Petronella, who was lying sick from the alarm occasioned by the apprehension that her nephew was implicated in the prisoner's flight, received her with the bitterest reproaches.

CHAPTER XII.

"WHAT tidings do you bring me, worthy father?" said Madame Frosch to her confessor, Reinhold, as he entered the room. "Tell me, dear sir, are you the messenger of life or death?"

The priest made the sign of the cross upon Margaret's forehead, and replied, "Dear sister, the servants of the church are never the messengers of death, so long as a perfect confidence is reposed in that rock upon which it is built. They are rather the bearers of life, inasmuch as they afford heavenly consolation to the contrite sinner. Entertain no longer, however, any hope from your husband, dear lady. He is as obdurate as a flint, and will neither suffer your entreaties nor my intercession to prevail against his obstinate prejudice.

He considers that his son, Dagobert, has robbed him of his honour, and looks upon little Hans as the fruit of an illicit connexion between him and you."

"He has then, at last, made the declaration which I anticipated!" exclaimed Margaret, whilst tears started into her eyes, "and yet I am as innocent as an unborn infant."

"Who can doubt it," said Reinhold; "although you have loved the young man, as no one has better reason to know than myself."

"And yet am I to be so misjudged?" rejoined Margaret.

"Consider this as a punishment for the error you have committed, in adopting a strange child, in place of your deceased son. This in itself is no very grievous sin; but the means taken to procure the boy are not without guilt. To make a Jew your confidant, a creature more detestable than the negroes in Africa, who are only half human, must be productive of evil consequences. I am surprised your name has not been already mentioned to the judges on the bench, and heaven has not hitherto pointed out to me the means of extricating you from your perplexity."

"Would it not be best to tell the truth?" asked Margaret. "Should I not be restored to peace by openly confessing what I have done."

The father shook his head significantly.—
"There is an old proverb, 'We must not awaken the sleeping wolf.'—The arrow once discharged from the bow cannot be recalled. No! you would expose yourself to certain disgrace, while at present you are only an object of suspicion, and what is this to a quiet conscience? It is like a serpent deprived of its fangs, and lying harmless at your feet. But who would venture to make known an unlawful traffic with a Jew? I will, however, obtain further information to-morrow, and will endeavour, if possible, to convert those heathens to the true faith before they are given over to the executioner."

"You are adverse then," asked Margaret, "to a candid acknowledgment?"

"It is our duty," rejoined Reinhold, "to make acknowledgments to God and his church, of our most secret thoughts and actions, yet it is not necessary to make our confessions to any but those whom the church has appointed to receive them. I know but of one man who

could afford you any service if you made such a confession, because his protection would extricate you from the painful situation in which Diether's suspicion has placed you. I mean the bailiff, who has long endeavoured to win your regard. I think he would gladly do any thing to obtain it. A word from you, and those villanous Jews would soon be quietly disposed of; the elder would then be silenced, and the child remain—what he should be—your heir."

"Never!" rejoined Margaret, indignantly; "and do I hear this counsel from spiritual lips? No; I have no desire to become in reality what my husband considers me to be. Urge me no more on this head, worthy sir! I am not capable of doing what you suggest. Say no more, therefore, upon the subject, but tell me of Willhild, who is acquainted with my secret. I have heard nothing of her, and her silence occasions me much uneasiness."

"I can quiet you on this point," replied the priest, "I have obtained information that Willhild and her husband set out a few days ago upon a pilgrimage to Compostella. Give yourself no trouble about them. The husband

is little better than an idiot, and the wife, who has been lately very ill, will certainly not live to return from Spain."

"I never supposed that the expectation of a human creature's death could console me," observed Margaret, despondingly.

"Hope is always sweet," said the confessor. "When the flames have destroyed the Jew, and Willhild shall have fallen a sacrifice to the fatigues of her intended pilgrimage, it will not be long before you will attend the elder to his grave! Your fetters will then be loosened, and you will have no further cause for regret."

"Alas! reverend sir!" exclaimed the elder's wife with a sigh, "come what may, I trust that event is far distant! If I cannot love the old man as a bride would love a handsome bridegroom, I nevertheless respect his gray hairs, and cannot but feel grateful to him for having dragged me from poverty, and raised me to affluence, and thus rescued me from much misery."

"Psha!" rejoined the friar; "if Diether has raised you from poverty, he would now consign you to unmerited disgrace. He ought to honour you for the generous sentiments which

you entertain towards him. The old man is unworthy of them; for even this very day he is in dread of an attack upon his life by assassins, which he suspects, to be in the pay of you, your brother, and Dagobert. Yet this suspicious old debauchee you think worthy of your respect and gratitude."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Margaret, "is it possible that he can be in fear of assassination by his wife!"

"More than this," continued the monk.— "A stranger has informed him that he might learn tidings of Wallrade, if he would repair to-night to Sprünglin with a certain sum of money. He considers this information as proceeding from you, and, suspecting treachery, will neither go nor send."

"At Sprünglin, do you say?" asked Margaret, who was curious to ascertain the fact.

"At Sprünglin!" replied Reinhold. "Is it acting the part of a kind father to neglect any chance of rescuing his child from captivity? However, to you I know it is a matter of indifference; in fact, Wallrade's absence, perhaps, would be grateful to you; but I suspect that you would have no objection to the presence of

the good Dagobert, whose undaunted conduct may be of service to you and your cause. Is it not so?"

Margaret cast her eyes upon the ground, to escape the penetrating looks of the confessor; who, after a pause, proceeded:—"Had the young gentleman become a priest, instead of abandoning the church, that would not have happened which has now become the conversation of the whole town."

"In the name of heaven!" exclaimed Margaret, with anxiety; "what *has* happened to him? Speak——"

"You have not heard, then? I can easily suppose your maids may have been silent upon the subject, out of respect for you; but I could not have imagined that your husband would have withheld it from you. Dagobert Frosch is summoned to appear before the Secret Council at Sachsenhausen, next Tuesday, to answer for some heinous misdeeds of which he is accused"—

"Great God!" cried Margaret, in a faltering voice; "before the Secret Council! Poor Dagobert! What demon has arraigned thee before that dreadful tribunal, where justice is

ever denied to the prisoner? Alas! I fear I have been the cause of his falling into this frightful snare! Who shall advise me—who shall assist me now?”

The priest bade her rely upon the will of God; and exhorting her to silence, took his leave, with the promise of soon returning, to let her know whether the Jew was disposed to make a confession dangerous to her safety.

Upon finding herself once more alone, Margaret became the prey of indescribable anguish; and endeavoured to collect, in her distracted state of mind, all the circumstances which had so recently occurred. Conscious of her error, she resolved to enter upon some enterprise, by which her conscience might be appeased. “I will at least oblige him,” said she to herself, “not to believe the worst of me—not to believe me guilty of Wallrade’s abduction—nor of the more horrible guilt of directing the assassin’s arm against his life. If it be the will of Heaven that I perish in the undertaking, let it be so! —If not, I shall bend the knee in grateful reverence to Heaven, for having directed me how to extricate my family out of the difficulties in which my error had involved them.”

With a trembling hand she collected her little stock of jewels, medals, and gold-pieces, for which she was indebted to her husband's liberality, and at the same time selected from her wardrobe a large wrapping cloak, which appeared to her well adapted to her purpose. Upon her maid entering with little Hans she said, "My good Else, you have already borne with my hasty temper with much patience. Now, that adversity has opened my eyes, and made me sensible that forbearance is a duty, I thank you for yours, which has ever been accompanied with the strictest fidelity,—accept my gratitude."

The maid was astonished at the unusually endearing tone in which her mistress addressed her, and declared her readiness to obey whatever commands she might impose upon her. She kissed Margaret's hand, asking, with tears in her eyes, "What shall I do, respected lady, that may be agreeable to you, or restore your heart to peace? If a weak servant can accomplish what you desire, depend upon me."

"I must away," said Margaret, extremely agitated, "this very night. Assist me in quitting

this house, in which sorrow and anxiety are fast consuming me."

"Away, do you say?" asked Else, in astonishment. "Are you in earnest? In the name of the blessed Virgin, what are your intentions now, dear lady? Would you desert your husband, and abandon your own reputation to the calumnies of the censorious? Oh! my dear mistress, relinquish, I beseech you, such a rash resolution! You are young,—a mother, and a wife. Despair not of finding that compassion which never deserts the virtuous in their sorrows. Rely upon the Almighty—He will not suffer you to perish. Truth must finally come to light, and your enemies be put to shame. Whither would you fly; probably never to return alive? Oh! my dear lady, think of your boy!"

She here led the child to Margaret, who, looking upon him with an expression of anguish, laid her hand upon his head, and said, "Poor boy, you are the origin of all the mischief which has befallen us, and are the only innocent one among us. Whatever may be my fate, you will, I hope, find a father in Diether."

"May God grant it," said the maid, with a

sigh. "What, however, will the suspicious elder do to the child, when his mother leaves him with such indifference?"

"Are you reproaching me with want of a mother's feelings?" asked Margaret, with warmth, but soon regaining her composure, she continued:—"The night is coming on, my good Else, take care to inform me when my husband quits the house this evening, and then open the door for me. I have resigned the keys to the elder, but—what is the meaning of the bustle which I hear in the passages?"

Else left the room.

In the mean time Hans approached the pensive Margaret, and folding his little hands, said, "Dear mother, you will come again; you will not leave me all alone with the dark man, who will neither see nor hear us?"

"I shall come again, my boy," replied Margaret, stroking his head, "and if I do not return, you will have no cause to be unhappy. You are an innocent child. No harm will happen to you!"

"Ah! too much harm has been done already to little Hans," replied the boy, "the black mother has often beaten him; she at last de-

served him entirely. But you are so kind a mother, and will you desert me also?"

"Nonsense, child," said Margaret, gently rebuking him, "think no more of these idle dreams."

"Though they are dreams, they will turn out true," replied the boy, "for Else took me into the street, where I played with other boys, and when I grew tired, she placed me before a beautiful large house, took my hat off, and wiped the perspiration from my face. Then it was that I saw the man who discovered me when my black mother was gone away from me, and he stood before me just as he was at that time, and when I dreamt of him, as you say——"

"What man do you mean, child?" asked Margaret, while her heart throbbed violently.

The boy recollected himself a little, and replied: "I have slept with him and have ridden upon his knee. Oh! dear mother, what large whiskers he has!"

"Where did you see him, Hans?"

"He stood at the window," continued the boy, "with a tall black gentleman by his side. They looked at me for some time. He would

certainly have spoken to me, if he had not been in the house and I in the street."

"To be sure he would," rejoined Margaret, "but as he did not come out to you, you have a proof that it was nothing more than a dream, of which I forbid you ever again to say a word; do you hear? If you wish me to return, remember what I have forbidden you."

"My dear mother," replied the child, caressing her, "come again, and I will say nothing more about it. Do come back."

Else now returned. "Respected lady," said she, entering cautiously, "my master's brother, the priest from Italy, is just arrived with a very beautiful young lady, who appears to be a relation. The elder has ordered Eitel to look out some Spanish wine, and to prepare a good supper. The servants are busy in the kitchen, the door is open, and the night propitious, if you still persist in your intention."

"Come, Else, assist me," said Margaret, "and you, little Hans, sit yourself down in the corner, and be still. I will soon return, and bring you some pretty playthings."

Hans did as he was bid. Else now threw

the cloak around her mistress, and placed a little box under her arm, "Heaven grant," said she, "that you may not have to repent leaving your husband and child?" "God grant it," replied Margaret, as she gently opened the door. Else followed her, listening if there was any approaching footstep. The heavy house-door was soon opened, and her mistress disappeared in the twilight.

Margaret, whose imagination was excited by the wildest fantasies, hastened through the streets of the town, over which hung a dim misty atmosphere. The moon gave that pale sickly light which indicated the approach of a storm or rain. It was an unusual spectacle to see a female of the better class wandering, at that late hour alone about the streets, and she therefore escaped not the importunities of many a gallant youth. She paid no attention to those who saluted her courteously, repulsed the more daring with sharp rebukes, and turned a deaf ear to the coarse jokes which were passed upon her by the watchmen. Having one object alone in view, she walked at a rapid pace beyond the suburbs, while the dim light of the moon, with an occasional flash of light-

ning above the distant hills clearly indicated the road to the farm-house. Notwithstanding all her resolution, being unaccustomed to such solitary wanderings, she offered up a fervent prayer to the God of all mercy and of all comfort, when the barking of dogs announced her approach to the farm. Crescentia looked out at the window to ascertain the cause of the howling, and was somewhat alarmed when her mistress demanded immediate admission into the house. Her order was instantly obeyed, and the old servant ushered Margaret into the principal apartment, in which she perceived a tall man, who had just taken a slight repast, and rose up under considerable embarrassment upon seeing her enter the door. "Vollbrecht!" exclaimed the elder's lady, overcome with a mixture of painful and joyful surprise at beholding him; "are you here? Where is your master?"

Vollbrecht now informed her, that after crossing the country in all directions in a vain search of the elder's daughter, they were on their return this evening to Franckfort, when Rudiger, the young lady's own servant, was taken seriously ill, and they were obliged to put up at a miserable alehouse by the road

side. Dagobert had, hereupon, despatched him towards Franckfort to ascertain if, by any chance, his sister had returned, and how matters stood with his dear father and mother and little Hans. He was desired, however, not to omit calling at the farm-house, to salute Crescentia, and inform her that her young master was well, and would appear in person as soon as Rudiger's health would permit.

"For God's sake!" exclaimed Margaret, "hasten back to him—tell him not to approach Franckfort; his home will be his grave. He has been summoned before the Secret Council, and no just man was ever acquitted by that horrible tribunal. Yet what do I say," added she, recollecting herself, "shall I bid him banish himself from his native land, without first informing him how all things are going on? No, no! Good Vollbrecht, forgive me if I have spoken hastily, but tell him what I have repeated to you, for his safety depends upon his being informed of it. He knows the sincere regard which I bear towards him; I must, therefore, speak to him, although I know not if I shall be alive at the setting of another sun. Tell him, good fellow, to be here to-morrow about this

hour, to bid me farewell ! till then, however, he must remain concealed ; for his enemies have already arraigned him. Come, good Vollbrecht, make haste, Rudiger by this time must be either recovered or dead."

Margaret, in order to accelerate the movements of the undecided servant, put a piece of money into his hand, which liberality, coupled with the honest attachment that he bore his master, determined him instantly to depart, when, kissing the hem of Margaret's gown, in acknowledgment of her generosity, and shaking hands with Crescentia, in gratitude for her hospitality, he sprang upon his horse, and retraced his steps towards the alehouse where Dagobert awaited his arrival.

Crescentia's curiosity was excited to the utmost, as to the meaning of all that she had heard and seen, but the elder's lady simply said to her, "I must leave you this night, Crescentia, and my return is uncertain ;" but, finding, however, that she could not entirely withhold from her the motive of her departure, she was obliged to be somewhat more communicative. She enjoined the old woman to find out her husband, in case she did not return in the

morning, and inform him that she could no longer bear to live under his roof a suspected criminal. "I have been faithful to him," said Margaret; "Dagobert is as innocent as the angels in heaven; I have neither attempted the life of my lord and husband, nor been in any way privy to the abduction of his daughter, of which he has also accused me. Tell him to think of me when I am no more, and not to refuse his protection to little Hans, whatever may happen. Do you understand me, good Crescentia?"

The old woman had listened with the most anxious attention to all she heard. "I will do as you command me, revered lady," said she, "but may I never have been baptised if I understand what all this means!"

"Listen to the last injunction I shall probably ever lay upon you," continued Margaret. "Should I, however, be alive to-morrow evening, I will have a parting interview in this place with my son-in-law, in your presence. On the contrary, should the Lord of Life have summoned me to his rest, tell the unhappy youth, rendered unhappy through me, that to the latest moment of my existence, he was to me the

dearest object upon earth. I offered up my devotions to his image, as to my guardian angel." Here tears choked her utterance, and stammering out, "I can say no more,—farewell!" she rushed out of the room.

The anxious Crescentia followed her with tears and entreaties. Margaret was inexorable; and the old woman was obliged to point out to her the direction towards Bergen, when the resolute and agonized mistress, plunging into the thick darkness, for the moon was now no longer visible, vanished from the sight of her old and faithful servant.

Crescentia then bolted the gate, seated herself in her great chair, and began to reflect upon the strange occurrence of the evening. She felt satisfied, after a few moments' consideration, that Margaret's mind was disordered by a load of vexations, and began to reproach herself in the bitterest terms for having suffered her to escape, unattended, in the dismal darkness which prevailed. While she was reflecting upon her own improvidence, the reproaches which she should meet with from Diether, and the surprise which Margaret's message would occasion young Dagobert, she heard the dogs snuffing

without, as if they were eating. The hardy old woman was searching for her lamp, when a gentle tap was given against the window-shutter. She immediately seized an axe, which stood in the corner, and opening the window, cried out, "You unhung villain! whoever you are, be off with you, for my servants will be up and about your ears at the first alarm. I have an axe too, in my hand, with which I will flatten your skull, if you attempt an entrance here. I am but a poor woman, and all, therefore, you are likely to get here will be a broken head."

"Make no noise," said the voice without. "I am no thief, but an honest man. I am come to give you a friendly warning."

"About what, varlet?" asked Crescentia.

"Ben David's daughter has been traced to this farm," continued the stranger, "and within an hour the harpies of the law will be here to seize the Jewess, and to take you to prison for having concealed her."

Crescentia's heart palpitated as she heard these words, and, half opening the shutter, the light which she held in her hand immediately fell upon Zodiah's hateful countenance.

"Who art thou, then, thou peace disturber?" asked she, half terrified.

"Do you not know me?" rejoined Zodia; "have I not often brought you assistance from David, the son of Joachim? you must remember me."

"Ah! it is thou, is it?" exclaimed the old woman. "Away with thee, liar! who brings his master to the scaffold by his diabolical perjuries."

"I am not the Jew Zodia," he replied, "that Zodia is no more; but a repentant Zodia is still alive, who wishes to save his master's daughter, whom an Israelite has betrayed to that libertine the bailiff."

"In the name of heaven!" rejoined the old woman, incredulously, "the bailiff do you say? Poor child! who was her betrayer?"

"Joseph, the physician," replied Zodia, in a whisper.

"Esther is not here, nor has she ever been here, you vile renegade," resumed Crescentia, sternly. "Carry your abominable tale about the chief judge and his satellites somewhere else—do you hear?"

"Don't tell me that Esther is not here," re-

plied Zodia, surlily. "I know who lives in the little room above as well as the prophet Elias. Let me in, that no misfortune happen to you, and that Ben David's innocent daughter may be rescued from the vile judges of Amalek, who will be here about the eleventh hour."

"Never shalt thou pass over this threshold," repeated Crescentia; "I neither believe thee, nor will I trust thee, apostate; away with thee."

A knife was now darted with the rapidity of lightning through the window, but Crescentia, perceiving in good time the assassin's intentions, sprang backwards, and closed the shutter with such force that the blade of the knife snapped in two. The foiled ruffian muttered curses without, upon the woman's adroitness, and at the loss of his weapon. Crescentia, however, cried out, "You red-haired monster, if you are not off this instant, I will alarm my people, and then, scoundrel, you shall find that the last loaf is baked for you."

The villain took the hint, and immediately decamped, while the dogs, who had been silenced as if by enchantment, never once stirred from their kennels.

CHAPTER XIII.

CRESCENTIA now hastened to the chamber in which the lovely Esther was concealed, in order to arouse the unhappy maiden, who, overcome with grief and bodily suffering, was about to be cast again upon the wide world, as the only chance left of escaping from her inexorable persecutors. Her agitation, upon hearing that she was betrayed, cannot be described.

While the kind old woman, however, was pointing out to Esther the most prudent means to be adopted for her escape from the evil which threatened her, the dogs set up a frightful howling, and at the same instant violent knocks were heard at the house door. Several voices now vehemently demanded admittance. "Remain still, my dear child," said Crescentia to Esther, who was trembling in every limb; "some means may occur to me

of rescuing you from the grasp of these myrmidons, before I open the door to them; it will take me some little time to strike a light, and I will endeavour to amuse them with pretences."

The visitors, however, all robust fellows and well armed, were by no means disposed to listen to any excuses. Crescentia entreated for a few moments' delay, but they threatened to cleave the door in pieces if it were not immediately opened. It was in vain that the good hostess urged the necessity of striking a light; they forthwith offered her their lanterns, and insisted with such vehemence upon immediate admittance, in the name of the chief justice, that the old woman had no alternative but to open the door forthwith.

Upon entering, the leader of this savage band, said to Crescentia, in a voice of thunder: "Deliver up the Jewess, whom you have unlawfully concealed, without further delay, or you will be condemned to the punishment of contumacy, and I need not tell you how such a crime is visited in Franckfort."

Crescentia, however, affecting extreme astonishment, pretended to be utterly ignorant of

the existence of such a person as he spoke of; the more hazardous this denial became, the greater effrontery she displayed in persisting in it, and she was about to strengthen her declaration by an oath, when the detestable Zodiah advanced to confront the courageous old woman.

"Believe not what the lying witch says," exclaimed he, to the hirelings; "the maiden has not escaped. I have kept too good a watch upon her. Yonder hag would out-lie a Jew—the Lord give her better grace; but her soul is fairly the Devil's. The little bird is in her nest, take my word for it. As you ascend the stairs, you will hear it chirping and clapping its wings."—At this moment a female voice was heard from above; "What in the name of heaven, woman, does all this noise mean?"

"That is she!" exclaimed Zodiah to the leader of the ruffians; "that is she!" re-echoed the whole band, while twenty hands were instantly stretched forth towards a girl who appeared upon the first flight of stairs, in her night clothes, which had been hastily thrown over her, in the greatest disorder. Upon seeing, however, that the attack was directed against her, she uttered a piercing cry, of "Oh, my child! my

child!" and, springing suddenly back into the apartment from which she had issued, slammed a heavy door behind her.

"You old Crone," exclaimed the leader of the band to the astonished Crescentia, giving her at the same time a smart blow upon the ribs; "there is the prey we are in search of. Neither the girl nor her child shall escape us; they shall both be burnt upon a dry faggot, and thou shalt be grilled to death over the embers. Open the door."

Crescentia, who was half petrified with affright, endeavoured, with a trembling hand, to fit key after key into the lock, but the ruffians growing impatient at her bungling, without further ceremony, dashed in the door with their axes. They now all rushed into the chamber like a troop of madmen, and seized the affrighted maiden, who, absolutely appalled at the sight of so many ferocious looking desperadoes, was about to leap from the window with the child in her arms.

While Crescentia was in vain exerting her lungs, in the midst of the uproar, in order to prove that their captive was not the object of their search, and the men were preparing their

cords not only to bind the supposed Esther, but also the mistress and her domestics, Zodiah, taking advantage of the confusion, snatched a candle from the hands of a gaping boy and instantly disappeared with it, to examine the upper part of the house. His heart beat with wild emotion, as he ascended the stairs leading to Esther's chamber, for he considered it possible that she might have escaped his fury; as, however, he opened the door of her apartment, his suspicious rage gave way to malignant joy. Poor Esther, overcome with terror, had never once thought of making her escape, but resigned herself to her cruel destiny like the lamb to the sacrifice. She had not even bolted the door, and was found upon her knees, in a corner of the room, praying, without knowing rightly what her lips gave utterance to. Here her inexorable enemy laid hold of her—here his horrid voice sounded in her ears: "You are mine, girl—mine for ever! Do you not remember my last words? The full moon has risen, and I am come to fetch home my bride."

"Monster!" rejoined Esther, raising herself up with dignified scorn—for a full sense of her utter destitution had now imparted to her un-

wanted energy—"here are my hands—bind them! but do not ill-use the woman who has cherished me like the dove in the wilderness."

Zodiah now carefully extinguished the candle, and laying firm hold of Esther's right hand, cautiously led her down the stairs. The uproar still continued in the room on the first floor. The villain hearing this, hurried his captive along; and having covered her head and eyes with his large cap, made good his retreat. The night was extremely dark, and the rain fell in torrents.

Zodiah, quitting the main road, dragged the unhappy girl over swamps and through thickets, and finally descended a rugged declivity into a lonely glen, in which the dark shadows of a morass were seen by the dim light of the moon, which was occasionally visible above the murky horizon. On the edge of this swamp stood a low dirty hut, from which a faint twinkling light was emitted, like that from the glow-worm in a dark hedge. Zodiah ordered Esther to tread softly, while he approached the aperture whence the light proceeded, in order to take a view of the interior. In the meanwhile, Esther's

bosom heaved with such intense anxiety, that she could scarcely stand.

Zodiah soon ascertained that he had nothing to fear from the inmates of the hovel. He tapped gently at the little window, and uttering something which was perfectly unintelligible to Esther, was immediately answered from within. He now conducted his trembling companion to the door of this miserable dwelling, which had by this time been opened. "Good times to you!" said he to the hostess, who appeared at the threshold, with a burning splinter in her hand, and carefully locked the door after them. "Is all right, dame, within," asked the cautious ruffian.

"Aye, all is right—you have nothing to fear," answered the old woman; at the same time measuring the trembling Esther from head to foot.

"Is Marten at home?" inquired Zodiah, glancing round the wretched apartment with a cautious and suspicious eye.

The hag answered in the affirmative; and immediately opened the door of a most miserable room, in which the heartless ruffian was seated upon a filthy bench, his eyes inflamed with

drink, and his hands still foul with the stains of murder.

Esther shuddered, and set herself down in silent anguish upon a stool in the corner.

Marten gave Zodiah his blood-stained hand, and after a brief salutation, reproached him for his long absence.

"I have had other business on my hands," replied the wretch, "and could therefore find no time to waste in petty pilferings. I have now brought you a guest, who is more valuable than all the daughters of Israel. I wish to-night to be accommodated with this room for myself and wife." This the old woman readily assented to; telling him, however, that there was no window in it.

Zodiah set up a loud laugh. "Bride and bridegroom," said he, "never inquire about windows or light. We can do without them; can't we, dearest?"

Esther turned away from him with absolute loathing: her countenance, the while, was blanched with horror, and she looked like a statue of despair.

Marten smiled: his heart had been too long seared for sympathy to find entrance within it.

"The maiden," said he, "will go about as merrily to the nuptial bed as a young heifer to the slaughter-house. You are well matched. I wish my babbling servant, Wolfhard, would return; it is nearly eleven o'clock, and I must be out again before midnight."

Zodiah, in the meantime, whispered in Esther's ear—"You had better submit quietly to your fate. If you offer the least opposition to my wishes, you shall never more behold the light," and he pressed the cold blade of his dagger against her arm. "You have only a short time to reflect upon the alternative. You may enjoy a long and happy life, if you will only confess where your father has concealed his treasures;—refuse, and thou shalt die by these hands!—I swear to thee, girl, that if thou continuest silent, thy silence shall be eternal!"

"Death, monster! will be far more welcome than dishonour. Do thy worst! I will never divulge a parent's secret!"

Zodiah gave her a menacing look, and turning his back towards her, drained a large goblet of wine, which the hostess had placed before him.

In the meantime the door opened, when Judith unexpectedly entered. She fixed her penetrating eye alternately upon Zodiah and Esther, without offering any salutation to either. The Jew turned away from her with a contemptuous scowl, and Esther, who thought she discovered the features of a new enemy in her dark and saturnine aspect, averted her eyes. Judith guessed her thoughts, and approaching her, mildly said, "Poor girl, how I pity thee! Believe me, I am not such as my appearance in this den of infamy may warrant you in suspecting. Would I could say that all around you is illusion. It is, alas, on the contrary, but too horrible a reality. What brought you into this lair of the wolf and of the tiger? This is an accursed house. The vial of heaven's wrath will be poured out upon it, and shortly too, or there is no truth in prophecy. The wretched man, whom you there behold reeling in the excess of his vile debauchery, is my father, and this inhuman woman is my mother. Oh, that I should have been brought into this miserable world by a being so degraded." "Arise, woman," said she, imperiously, "from the side of innocence, nor longer contaminate

it with thy presence." The mother reluctantly obeyed her daughter's bidding.

Zodiah, whose gestures indicated considerable impatience, drew the father aside, and made strict inquiries about the men who were lying in the barn. Marten assured him that nothing was to be dreaded from them. "One was dying," he said, "and the second was occupied in nursing him. There was a third," he continued, "but I fancy he grew sick of the accommodation, and has decamped." Zodiah, however, was still for plundering them; "their horses, at least," said he, "may be worth a trifle."

"True," replied Marten, "but to plunder in places where any one is dying a natural death, is an omen of ill-luck."

Zodiah reluctantly acquiesced. "Still we shall but be losing time," said he, "if we gain nothing to-night before my bride and I retire to our happy rest."

"Well," said Marten, wiping his lips with his gory fingers, "if the necessity for an adventure is so pressing with you, I can put you upon one that will bring a handsome reward. I have good information that some towns-

people from Bergen intend digging, towards midnight, at Sprünglin, for a treasure, which has been discovered by a priest. I would willingly have allowed Wolfhard a participation in the spoil, but the fellow's delay has lost him a precious plunder; and you, therefore, my honest comate, shall supply his place."

"I'm your man, bully. By the powers! I will be off this instant," said the apostate; "but your wife must first promise to take charge of my Esther, as if she were the apple of her own eye, and to deliver her up to me at my return. Come, clean your spectacles, old housewife. You have to take care of a lovely bird and a loathsome reptile, my beautiful Esther, and your ugly daughter. If a hundred marks in silver were not to be gained, by the holy Sanhedrim! I would rather lose paradise than quit my angel for an instant."

The old woman solemnly protested that she would stake her neck upon Esther's security. Zodiah and Marten then painted their naked arms and haggard faces with a dark red colour, drew a coarse cap over their heads, and buttoned on a kind of iron breast-plate. When they were fully equipped for their murderous

enterprise, they sallied forth in search of fresh plunder, burning with the thirst of rapine and of blood.

Esther was somewhat relieved by their absence. She continued, however, in a state of mental agony, which may be much better imagined than described. Judith sat by her side, with folded hands, uttering a Latin prayer. Her mother having locked the door of the hovel, asked, surlily, "What she meant by her gibberish?"

"My gibberish, woman, is a prayer for the dead," replied the maiden, solemnly. "Be merciful," exclaimed the distracted Esther, "and rid me at once of life before my horrible persecutor returns."

"Despair not, maiden; trust in the God above!" said Judith, "for his grace, like the firmament over our heads, knows no bounds. He suffers no one to perish who trusts in his mercy. When it is His pleasure to summon you to Himself, you will yield up your soul into his hands, but I dare not anticipate his blessed will."

"Daughter! you have really lost your senses," said the mother, fetching a deep sigh,

and wandering about the room under evident perturbation of mind. "How disrespectfully you conduct yourself towards me, and before this stranger, too; your undutiful behaviour and insolent language have been permitted beyond endurance. I insist that you hold your tongue, and no longer vex me by your base reproaches."

"That I can do," replied Judith, rising up, "mine is not the only voice in the world which is unjustly silenced. I will be obedient to you, and fulfil my promises to the last; for the period at which my filial obedience must terminate will, I fear, but too soon arrive. Mother! your time is short! repent, I beseech you before it is too late."

"Forbear," said the old woman, shuddering, "your preaching is more odious than your reproaches. Let me hear no more of it."

"Look," said Judith, "at this unhappy stranger; she appears to be the most miserable of us all; yet, if she is not rich in the unrighteous mammon, she is possessed of the true riches—a good conscience; and, therefore, how much richer than thou art, wretched mother! She has a father who is innocent and

suffering in prison. He is innocent, I say—would to God I could truly say the same of thee! Give me your hand, poor sinner. I will forgive you in the name of the Lord of all, who will requite you if you will discard the demon of cruelty from your savage breast, and—”

The old beldam repulsed her angrily. “Curse of my days, cease this vile cant, or thou shalt be confined for a maniac. Leave the girl in peace. It is not every person who threatens self-destruction that commits it. Besides, what would it signify to us, if she were to go out of the world by her own rash act? She is, however, no such fool. Her bridegroom will return ere long, and she will think better on’t.”

Esther turned from the hag with a look of the most ineffable disgust, and walked haughtily into the other apartment. The old woman instantly bolted the door. Judith remained with her mother. Neither now uttered a word. The mournful stillness was interrupted only by the sobs of Esther, and the violence of an approaching storm; nor was it long before it broke over the hut with tremendous impetuosity. The old crone’s anxiety increased with the raging of the tempest. She now mut-

tered a few prayers, which she always had recourse to upon similar emergencies, whilst her lips quivered, and her mind was confused with terror. She continued mumbling between her teeth words without connection or coherence. Judith, who perceived her mother's mental anguish, approached her, and said, "It is of no avail to torture your body for the good of your soul. The stains of guilt are there, and of too deep a die to be expunged by a few empty prayers, wrung from you by your fears. What can avail with Him, who knoweth the heart, those professions in which it does not participate? Nay, roll not your eyes about so horribly, nor sigh, as if a mountain were upon your breast; it is all unavailing, since it is the terror of death, and not contrition for past guilt, which depresses your spirit at this fearful hour."

A tremendous clap of thunder, which shook the very earth, now stifled the words of rising rage, which were upon the tongue of the distracted mother. The dark clouds discharged from their teeming bosoms a volume of portentous flame, which seemed to set the surrounding country in a blaze, while the thunder rolled

along the agitated heavens, until it was faintly reverberated among the distant hills, and then sank into momentary silence. Judith, who thought she heard Esther's voice of lamentation, listened at the door of the chamber to which she had retreated. The poor girl was praying loud and fervently in Hebrew. A tremendous flash was at this moment accompanied by a peal of thunder more deafening than any which had preceded it, whilst the roaring of the wind was appalling. The windows were blown in, and the house shook to its very foundation.—Even Judith was overawed at the fierce raging of the tempest, whilst her mother was convulsed with affright, and roared with frantic vehemence. “Hearken! Judith! merciful heaven, it is the dead man out of the morass—I hear his voice—save me—save me!”

“Oh no! no! mother!” replied the daughter, violently agitated, “the thunder is singing a song of peace to the dead; but it is the knell of him who is now staggering towards the door of his sinful dwelling, and whose cry is borne upon the dark wings of the midnight blast.”

“In the name of the Holy Mother, what are

you saying?" said the old woman, with a hoarse scream, "surely it is not the knell —"

"Of thy husband and my father!" said Judith, in a solemn but agitated voice, as a face as pale as death presented itself at the window.

"Behold, it is my father and thy husband!"

"Saviour!" cried the frantic mother, rushing out with a burning splinter, "Oh, God! Marten, you are covered with blood!"

"Let me in," said Marten, faintly, who was most dreadfully wounded in the head; "let me end my life among ye."

The moment he stepped over the threshold, in spite of all his endeavours to keep on his legs, he sank on the ground exhausted, and was laid on Judith's miserable bed, by his wife and daughter. Nothing could stop the effusion of blood. Notwithstanding all the efforts of those around him, and his guilty wife's appeals to heaven, which sounded more like blasphemies than prayers, the hoary murderer expired, without one sign of penitence or one aspiration to the throne of heaven for the salvation of his guilty soul. The beldam raved like a demon, for her's was agitated by the most frightful horrors. Judith, seizing the favour-

able moment when her mother had buried her face in the counterpane by the side of her husband's corpse, took up the key which had fallen from her hand, and crept softly to Esther's chamber door, which she opened, and said, in a gentle whisper, "Come, my father is dead, and the Jew has most probably shared the same fate. This is the moment for escape. Hasten to the barn; you will be more secure among the banditti there than here. Let me rescue your innocence from this den of infamy." Esther stepped out of her prison, and tremblingly followed her conductor to the barn. The clattering of horses' hoofs was heard within; and as Judith opened the wide portal, two men were seen sitting by the side of a covered corpse, which they were watching by the glimmer of a half-extinguished lamp. Upon hearing a noise they rose, and seized their swords, but Esther's piercing look was more powerful than their weapons; for at the sight of her the sword of one of them fell to the ground, a heavenly smile beamed upon his saddened countenance, and exclaiming, "Esther! my beloved Esther!" she fell into his arms overcome with astonishment and joy.

During this scene Judith stood rubbing her forehead, quite bewildered, casting her eyes at one time upon Dagobert, at another upon Vollbrecht, who was as unable as Judith to comprehend the scene before him, and could not conceal his surprise.

Judith hurried from the barn to console her disconsolate mother, and as she approached the hut, she perceived by the pale moonlight, which streamed at intervals through the shattered clouds, the shadow of a man hurrying towards the door, which he hastily entered. The thought that Zodiah might not be dead—that the Jew might be that shadow, darted into her brain like the sting of a scorpion. “I had hoped the judgment of heaven had overtaken him,” she muttered; “but should he be still alive—should that be his accursed form!—oh! where will our misery end?” She listened for a moment, when a horrible cry was heard from the hovel. “It is my mother!” shrieked the terrified girl. “She has fallen beneath the assassin’s knife,” and she sprang forward to offer her own bosom to the murderer’s pogniard, in order to save the life of her guilty parent. The door was closed. For some

time it resisted her utmost efforts to open; when, grown desperate, at length, by the horrible struggles which were audible within, she raised a huge stone and dashed it against the frail barrier, which instantly gave way. She then darted, like a roused lioness, into the hut, her features at one moment betraying the anguish of her heart, at another an almost ferocious determination, and stood fearlessly before the ruffian. It was too late—her mother's dying groans, mingled with the imprecations of the murderer, smote horribly upon her ear. The monster, his hands still reeking with his victim's blood, was engaged in breaking open the cupboards, trunks and boxes, in order to secure whatever property they might contain. What a frightful spectacle now presented itself to the agonized Judith! The reed wainscotting was thrown down, and her dying mother lay stretched upon it, weltering in her blood. The knife was still sticking in her breast. Her father's corpse was hanging half out of the bed, which was stained with the robber's gory hands. Trunks and boxes were broken open, and the plunder of many a year lay scattered around. In the midst of this horrid scene stood the

abominable Zodiah streaming with blood, gnashing his ferocious jaws, whilst the foam oozed through his poisonous lips, from the vehemence of his execrations. A piercing shriek escaped Judith as she entered the abode of death. The expiring mother heard it, folded her hands in an attitude of supplication towards her distracted child, and with one deep-drawn sigh rendered up her spirit to the God who gave it.

The presence of Judith had not escaped the murderer's notice. His ghastly eye glared upon her with deadly ferocity, whilst he raved with the frantic vehemence of an infuriated demon,—“May the curse of thy base family overtake thee!” and letting fall from his left hand the sack into which he had thrown the most valuable of Marten's property, with his right he grasped the bloody knife which hung at his side. Judith, perceiving his intention, drew the steel that was nearly buried in her mother's breast—raised it warm and reeking with a parent's gore, and placing herself in an attitude of defence, cried—“Approach, detested Jew, inhuman homicide; destroy me as thou

hast destroyed my mother, but be assured that my life shall be dearly sold."

"I swore to her that I would do so," replied Zodiah, as he drew back towards the wall; "you have assisted my captive in her escape, a crime which yonder dead witch has dearly expiated."

"Monster!" exclaimed Judith, while tears of anguish trickled down her sallow cheeks; "approach me if you dare; I am arm'd, and will defend myself. This very moment I depart for Franckfort. The sword of justice hangs over you, for I will unmask your infamy. Despair seize thee, villain! I am going to Franckfort!"

So saying, she rushed out at the door, and ran with the velocity of a chamois, pursued by the murderer. The confidence she felt in the justice of her cause, and the consciousness of having a sacred duty to perform, enabled her to outrun her pursuer.

Zodiah's execrations became less and less audible, until they at length died away in the distance, and were heard no more.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE agitated countenance of Diether Frosch, as he entered the ante-chamber of the town-house, sufficiently indicated the vehemence of his emotions. He inquired, in a tone of stern authority, for the bailiff. The servant immediately showed him to the audience chamber, in which the functionary, who feigned to be much concerned, was pacing up and down, with his hands behind him.

“ I am happy to find you alone, bailiff,” said Diether, “and yet I would rather have told you in the presence of witnesses, what I cannot keep a secret from the world. I take the liberty of now informing you that you are a disgrace to the profession to which you belong, and I suspect that you would cut but a sorry figure, if you were demanded to give a true account of yourself; for you must, in that

case, either lie or be disgraced for ever. It is really a misfortune, that the public weal should be entrusted to a person so corrupt and unprincipled; to one who, by never bridling his own passions, affords an example to others of the vilest immorality. You are the true wolf in sheep's clothing, bailiff."

"Are you mad, elder?" tauntingly asked the law-dignitary, "or are you still tormented by the demon of jealousy?"

"No subterfuge!" resumed Diether, sternly. "Your taunts will not annul your iniquities. Allow me to ask, what I am to understand by the illegal proceedings of last night? Upon what authority did you presume to violate the sacred privileges of a citizen, and make such an atrocious attack upon my property? How could you dare to send your satellites into my farm-house, and arrest those whom I had placed there, when they had been guilty of no infraction of the laws? Is my house a brothel, think you, that it is to be visited in a manner so extrajudicial and arbitrary? I demand from you an account of your conduct, and that you instantly liberate the innocent individuals whom you have detained."

"You are mistaken," replied the functionary, in a tone of derision; "I am sufficiently well informed of the circumstances to which you allude, but they were not the consequence of my orders. What could I have to do with your property? The chief justice, however, was fully authorized, by virtue of his office, to attempt the capture of a female criminal whom we have long been in search of; and as he had information of her having been concealed by your son, in the farm-house you speak of, he was perfectly justified in adopting those measures which were most likely to ensure the capture. The wench, however, as it appears, had timely warning of her danger, and effected her escape; but another was captured in her stead, in whom you are probably nearly interested; she, together with her child, will be restored to your protection, after she has undergone the customary examination. Thus the matter stands, and I cannot but think it very presumptuous in you, Mr. Elder, to take upon you thus to calumniate me."

"Thou art a smooth-tongued serpent," replied Diether, fiercely, "there is a deadly venom under thy painted skin. The justice

lays the blame upon you, and you cast the odium upon him."

"Am I to be thus braved with impunity?" exclaimed the enraged official. "Dotard ! drive me not to extremities with you. I have been long since heartily tired of your duplicity. You furnish at once an example of immorality and of lax discipline in your own house. The most disgraceful stories are told of your family at every corner of the streets. The name of Frosch is become a bye-word and a proverb; and, as I have heard, the Secret Imperial Council has taken cognizance also of the misdeeds of your son."

Diether stood motionless; overcome at once by the baseness of the calumny, and the audacity with which it was uttered.

The bailiff, perceiving that he had stung the detested elder to the quick, continued with a malignant smile, "How does your wife go on, Diether? I have heard that the lady Margaret has deserted you; you need not take the trouble to deny it, for it is no secret; and I am only astonished you do not charge me with having run away with her. Well, to say the truth, I cannot blame her. It is hard, indeed, for a

wife of pure morals to be linked to a crabbed husband, who affects the austere moralist, while he keeps his favorite in a snug retreat, not far from town."

Diether fixed his penetrating eye upon his traducer. "I forgive you," said he, calmly, "for the reproaches which you heap upon me; but have the goodness to inform me by what authority my wife is to be summoned before any tribunal, since I have not appeared, nor do I intend to appear, as her accuser?"

"Oh! my dear sir," replied the bailiff, with an air of levity, "that shall not be kept a secret from you; you shall certainly be informed of it this very morning."

The servant now announced, that the town-major and a serjeant requested an audience of the bailiff, to give him an account of what had happened at Sprünglin. After they had been ushered into his presence, the functionary recommended Diether to remain, as he would probably hear a detail of events which nearly concerned him. Serjeant Sebald now entered into a long recital of his adventures, accompanied by ten underlings, at Sprünglin. According

to his account, the Leuenberger had been discovered in company with a female; and so powerfully did the narrative work upon Diether's mind, that he suspected this female to be no other than his wife Margaret, and that her own evil conscience had induced her to leave him. "Alas!" he exclaimed, striking his temples. "I am now alone in the world—abandoned by my guilty wife—avoided by my profligate son, and robbed of my innocent daughter!"

"Prepare yourself to hear something more," said the bailiff; when Diether, who had covered his face with his hands, upon looking around him, saw the room filled with very unexpected company. Besides the justice, in his robes of office, there were present the Carmelite Friar Reinhold; the Priest Johannes, who was greatly celebrated for his learning; Gerard von Hülshofen, who appeared so emaciated as scarcely to be recognized; while, in the back ground, were visible the two spectral-looking figures of Joachim and Ben David. The father was unfettered, but the son was loaded with heavy manacles; his countenance, however, betrayed no fear, although his limbs trembled, partly

from weakness and partly from anxiety. Last of all, Diether observed little Hans, led by the mendicant friar.

"Most revered sir," said he, in a tone of astonishment, to Reinhold, "what has brought the boy into this assembly?"

"You will see," replied the friar, laconically.

The priest eyed the elder suspiciously. The boy, however, appeared to be under no dread of the confessor, but surveyed Hülshofen with much attention.

The servant having closed the door against the crowd which had collected, under the impression that the Jews were this day to be condemned to the stake—the chief justice took his seat; and, after offering places to the bailiff, the elder, and other persons of consideration, said, in a tone of authority, "Circumstances often arise in criminal courts, which render it necessary for us to depart from the ordinary forms. We have, therefore, resolved this day upon bringing the accused before an open tribunal, instead of a secret one, in order that all those persons may appear, who are in any way connected with the accusation, or interested in proving the crimes for which the prisoners have

been arraigned before us. Joachim and Ben David are directly accused of having murdered a Christian child. The cavalier, Von Hülshofen, has confessed that he sold a boy to the Jew David for a sum of money. The Jew has hitherto persisted in denying this ; and, in fact, he was to have been fixed upon the rack this very morning, had not a circumstance unexpectedly occurred last evening, which involves the matter in tenfold deeper obscurity, provokes new suspicions, and renders the whole affair extremely embarrassing. Von Hülshofen has sworn, upon oath, that this child is the same which he sold to the Jew David. The boy is the son of Diether Frosch, the elder, or at least considered as such. To set the matter in a clearer light, the little fellow shall be questioned in his father's presence."

The chief justice now addressed various questions to the boy in a mild tone of voice ; all of which he answered with so much simplicity, that no doubt remained of his being really the same which Gerard had found. The child, too, confirmed, as well as he was able, every assertion made by Von Hülshofen, respecting the manner in which the latter had treated and dis-

posed of him; which excited in the elder an ardent desire to penetrate what was certainly to him a most inexplicable mystery.

Gerard, endeavouring to take advantage of what seemed to him a favourable moment, said, with extreme humility, "Now, gentlemen, permit me to clear myself from the obloquy of this affair. I do, indeed, most truly repent of all that I have done in this unhappy business, as my present haggard appearance will sufficiently demonstrate. I promise to fast regularly, and contribute largely to alleviate the wants of the needy—that is, I mean largely for a poor cavalier—if you will only suffer me to depart like an honest man. You see the child has remained a Christian child, and has fallen into very genteel society. I wash my hands in innocence, therefore, and have no reproaches of conscience. Let the accursed Jew, who took advantage of my calamity, pay for his villainy, the scurvy declaimer against pork and sausage-meat! Thumb-screw the varlet until he cries *peccavi*. Spare him no torture, until he confesses what he intended to do with the boy. Suffer me, however, an honest Christian, to depart in peace."

The bailiff here gave the loquacious cavalier a stern look, which instantly silenced him; when, Joachim being called upon, he, without hesitation, admitted, that this boy was really the same which his son had brought into his house, and again removed, without saying what had become of him.

Ben David now came forward, and said, in a low but collected voice, "As the Lord is my helper, I confess that what my father has stated to you is true—this is the boy."

"In the name of heaven!" exclaimed Diether, "how is it that the honour of my family is thus implicated in the transactions of these vile Jews? What is the meaning of all this? Where is the boy? Is this child my son, or is he not? Speak, thou circumcised dog!"

The bailiff smiled maliciously, at the same time fixing his eyes upon Ben David, who replied, solemnly, "By the God of Abraham, sir, it is your son; you may believe it."

"Praised be the Holy One of Israel for having now opened the mouth of the dumb," exclaimed Joachim, as he embraced his son, who expected to be further questioned both by the judge and elder.

"By the holy martyrs," said the latter, vehemently, "if the boy be mine, how came he at Worms, and how did he fall into your hands, Jew? If you have begun to speak the truth, proceed with it, or acknowledge that you have this moment told a most atrocious falsehood. The guilt or innocence of my wife depends upon your words."

"I assert, upon the integrity of a priest, that Madame Margaret was as innocent in this affair as myself," exclaimed Reinhold, without allowing himself to be the least disconcerted by the bailiff's lowering countenance. "It is time, Diether Frosch, that you restore your wife to your confidence; she has never deserved unkindness at your hands. I am sorry that I must here disclose the conduct of an unnatural daughter, but I speak before men, and the truth must be spoken without dread of man. You cannot be ignorant, Diether Frosch, of your daughter's character. Jealous of her stepmother's influence over her father, in order to sink her in that father's estimation, she stole your child from Willhild's cottage, and carried it with her to Worms, on her way to Costnitz. There she exposed the boy to want and suffer-

ing, and left him asleep in the street. It was God's will that this man should find him and take care of him; when the Jew, who discovered that he was the son of a woman who had kindly dealt with him, lost no time in purchasing the boy, and restoring him to his disconsolate mother. When the child was stolen, Willhild had thrown herself at her mistress's feet, beseeching her with tears not to expose her carelessness to the father's anger. The humane mother was silent, concealing her sorrow in her own breast, in order to spare the unhappy but innocent nurse. Her prayer, however, was fervent; and was not, therefore, unheard. The boy was restored to her by means of a despised Jew. Wallrade at length appeared in her father's house, and afforded sufficient evidence that she had stolen the child, by the alarm which she betrayed at his unexpected appearance, by his evident aversion to her, and artless confession; then it was that Margaret's virtue was displayed in its brightest colours. She forbade Willhild, who wished to make the secret known to the elder, to interfere, and magnanimously forgave her bitter enemy, acting up to the truly evan-

gelical precept of the inspired teacher: 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.' She was silent in order that the father's affections might not be weaned from his daughter, but little anticipated that her own peace would so soon be disturbed by the most injurious suspicions. She chose rather to quit her husband's house, than to be obliged to appear before a court of justice, as the accuser of that husband's daughter, whose affection she had ever done her best to win. Since a strange concurrence of circumstances has suddenly threatened to plunge the respectable family of a worthy elder into the gulf of infamy, I considered that to keep silence longer, would be criminal; and have therefore publicly declared, in order to defend the absent party, what she has long since made me privy to, indeed, in the secrecy of the confessional, to, but in the most perfect confidence as her personal friend and spiritual director."

As the monk concluded, Diether fixed his eyes upon the boy, who did not appear much to relish his vicinity to the holy father. The chief justice bit his nails, while the bailiff with an incredulous smile threw himself back in his chair.

“And what have you to say, Jew?” said the chief justice at length, to Ben David.

“That I have done no wrong,” he replied, “in giving the boy back to his mother; and the consciousness of having acted rightly, is the best pillow for my head to repose upon, even in prison. I have always entertained a hope of being rescued from unjust destruction by that respectable Lady Margaret, and this confidence has never forsaken me.”

“Scoundrel!” said Gerard, “I wish my lance had been through thy vile Hebrew body before my name had been associated with thine. To stand cheek by jowl in a criminal court with a fellow that calls ham an abomination. What a cursed predicament for a cavalier.”

“You certainly have not shown yourself to much advantage, brave champion,” said the chief justice; “nevertheless, this intricate affair could not have been fully unravelled without your deposition; since nobody could suspect that this boy would be so much the subject of inquiry, in this impeachment of the Jews. But explain to us, Von Hulshofen, how it happened that young Dagobert, the son of the respected

elder, did not know his little step-brother, since he was present when the boy was found, as you have already deposed."

"Oh, Sir," replied Gerard, anxious to seize the opportunity of extricating himself from his dilemma; "this occurred on St. Martin's eve, when we were not all in a situation to distinguish rightly our father and mothers even, to say nothing of our brothers. I can very readily believe the Jew knew the child on the following day, and turned it to account. He took care not to make me as wise as himself in this particular. The rogue had his motive. I perfectly comprehend—"

"Yes; the cavalier perfectly comprehends how we deal," added Ben David, while a slight smile was visible at the corners of his mouth.

"I am uncommonly delighted," said the friar Johannes, who had hitherto remained silent, "that my dear Dagobert has been acquitted of all participation in this dark transaction. I was very much concerned to hear even the name of my pupil brought forward as concerned in any affair with an odious son of the circumcision."

Diether now took the child kindly by the hand, and heaving a deep sigh, said, "Come,

Hans, tell us yourself, my boy, who it was that took you away from Willhild?"

The child looked at him, and hesitated.

"Who left you at Worms?" added the chief justice.

"The black mother to be sure!" replied the child. "After beating me cruelly, she left me in the street, where I fell asleep, when the man here took me up."

"Quite right, boy," rejoined Reinhold, "but who is she whom you call the black mother?"

"Sister Wallrade," replied Hans, after a little reflection. "When she came back, and wished to kiss me, she had a little red gown on—I did not know her again."

"Who is your father, boy?" asked the bailiff sharply.

The child was startled at the abrupt manner in which he was addressed, but an encouraging shake of the hand by the priest, who was at his side, reassured him, and he pointed towards Diether, who now took the little fellow in his arms, and having kissed him fervently, exclaimed, "Yes, yes, thou art indeed my boy! You shall no longer want a father."

"That is your father, then," said the bailiff,

who was anxious to perplex the child; "but who is Dagobert?"

"My dear brother," replied Hans, with evident delight.

"And Madame Margaret, who is she?"

"My dearest mother!"

The disappointed official now rose hastily from his seat, and turning contemptuously towards the elder, said,—“happy are they who believe, and do not see.”

Diether repelled with a glance of haughty scorn the sarcasm of the defeated functionary, who now advanced towards the window; when the elder, turning to the court, said, "Certain occurrences which took place between my daughter and the child during the presence of the former in my house, as well as his own declarations which you have just heard, induce me to believe in the accuracy of the explanations which the worthy father Reinhold has laid before you. I thank him for it from my soul, since I now begin to perceive that I have been in the wrong, and at once therefore extend my pardon before God and this company both to Von Hülshofen and the Jew, for having made a child of mine an object of base barter. The chief thing which pains me at this moment is

that my wife should have taken a step which prevents her from confirming what has just been deposed in this place. Willhild, who must be perfectly well informed of the matter, went the second day after Wallrade's mysterious abduction upon a distant pilgrimage, and I have since heard nothing of her. My daughter's maid, however, who is, without doubt, privy to the whole affair, is within these walls; she it is, Mr. Bailiff, whom you unjustly detain a prisoner, because she had the misfortune to be taken for another by your ruffians."

"It is neither a misfortune of her's, nor a crime of mine," rejoined the bailiff, in a supercilious tone. "The chief justice will dispose of the girl and her child as in his wise discretion he shall think fit. Nor will he refuse to have her now brought forward."

The chief justice rang the bell, and ordered the girl to be ushered into court. In the meanwhile the Jews approached the justice in a most reverential manner, and kissed the hem of his garment. Joachim then said, "Learned judge, in the land of Edom, where the outcasts of Israel also dwell, the times have begun to be propitious, after having been so long unfavourable towards us. May you also become as pro-

pitious as they, and no longer consider my son a murderer, for such he is not, but by acquitting an innocent Jew show that a Christian can be merciful. The paradise of the just will one day be opened to him, and peace will bless both his memory and your's."

"What means this cant, thou hoary delinquent?" exclaimed the justice sternly; "you Jews are the most impertinent scoundrels upon God's earth. If we give you the bridle, you immediately want the horse. What is it you mean, dotard? You are neither justified, nor declared free. You may have still sold a child. You may have tortured another to death—there is no evidence to disprove this latter charge; and, until you are proved innocent, we must believe you guilty. It is impossible to think too vilely of a Jew; rather, therefore, confess your iniquities at once, for I swear to you by the official wig which covers these temples, that you shall not escape the rack."

Ben David entreated the justice to be merciful. "My father," said he, "is as pure as your own conscience, which cannot be defiled, since you are a most upright judge, and I am no less innocent of the cruelties with which I am charged. We might both confess, under the

torture, what has never happened. Are we to purchase our lives by such an extorted confession?"

"These are idle subterfuges!" exclaimed the justice, angrily. "The inquiry has already lasted too long. The prisons are full, and we have no time to lose—"

"Venerable sir!" interposed the priest Johannes, "you cannot have forgotten the melancholy affair which lately occurred at Friedberg. A Jew was there also accused of having practised witchcraft upon a child, and, while the matter was in a course of investigation, by God's permission, the Friedbergers burnt the poor man."

"You may be a hero, reverend sir, in the pulpit," replied the judge, sarcastically, "but allow me, if you please, to judge here! We are the servants of the state. The sword of justice is entrusted to our hands, not that we should play with, but use it, and it is better for ten innocent persons to fall by it, than that a single guilty one should escape."

"A most devilish maxim! with all due respect be it spoken," said Johannes, undauntedly, while the Jews cast a look of anguish at each other. "It is a maxim worthy of the

secret council, which causes the sword to descend upon the head of every one who is accused, whether innocent or guilty."

"You appear to be wiser than your betters, priest," observed the judge, with a bitter smile. "It is well for you that the garment you wear secures you from the scrutiny of such a council, otherwise it might stop the wagging of your presumptuous tongue."

"Spare your gibes, judge; and if you mean to act like an honest dignitary—for the which God give you his grace—let the accusers be immediately confronted with this child, that they may declare whether it be the same which was seen in the Jew's house. The testimony of the dumb sabbath maid should be first taken, for her signs are intelligible; the baptized Jew is said to harbour malice against his former master, and this consequently renders his testimony suspicious."

"These Jews," replied the justice, "have been detected in uttering the most atrocious falsehoods against the person whom you now so rashly villify. The maid, of whom you speak, is lately dead. Frederick, therefore, is the only evidence against the Hebrew criminals; his word is deserving of a better confidence than

you appear inclined to repose in it, because it hath lately pleased the Almighty to enlighten him with divine grace. He now adores, as well as we, that Redeemer whose very existence these Jewish dogs deny."

In the meantime the servant, who had been dispatched for the woman taken the preceding night from Diether's farm, hastily entered and whispered to the judge, who immediately cried out, "Let the keeper forthwith be cast into the condemned hole. He has suffered the prisoner to escape with her child."

"Come then, my son," said Diether, to little Hans, whom he caressed while he offered his hand to Father Reinhold, saying, "accept my thanks, holy father, for your consolation; I will do all in my power to recover the mother of this darling boy, and if, as you declare, her innocence has been preserved, I will restore her to this lacerated heart, and death alone shall disunite us."

"My dear sir," said Gerard, whispering into the priest's ear, "say a kind word for me to the judge, in order that he may at least permit me to be at large upon bail. I shall become as thin as my lance if I am longer kept in solitary confinement."

"My son," said Joachim to Ben David, despairingly, "after all we shall be sent back to our dungeons—nothing can save us from the rack."

The holy father had not found an opportunity of saying the kind word to the chief justice, which Gerard intreated, before the whole court became a scene of the utmost confusion. Human voices and footsteps now resounded along the passages, like the roarings of the stormy waves, when the doorkeeper rushed in, panting for breath, to announce that a numerous mob were forcing their way into the court. At their head was an ill-favoured, but tall robust woman. The upper part of her person was enveloped in a coarse black cloth, which hung down nearly to her feet. She addressed the throng with the most vehement gesticulations, urging them to be resolute, and follow her. The bailiff, whose ill-humour was at once dissipated by this intelligence, advanced with a dignified step towards the intruders, to whom the folding doors, which had been with great difficulty kept closed by the servants, were now opened. A number of persons immediately rushed into the room, in the midst of whom was Judith, whose distorted countenance at once bespoke the an-

guish under which she was labouring. She evinced a certain wild resolution which suffered her not to be intimidated, and even inspired the judge and bailiff with an unusual awe. "Judges and rulers of this town," she cried, in a hoarse but solemn voice, "if ye are capable of hearing, then hear what the Lord has commanded me to declare unto you :—Liberate those whom you have fettered, and bind him who is free ; for the fiery brand of guilt is upon his soul. So says the Lord our God, I will not that those, who have been led astray, suffer death, when they have been guilty of nothing deserving of death ! And I demand, in his holy name, that the murderer be punished, and the guiltless spared. Unbind, therefore, these Jews, for there is no fault in them ; it is their accuser alone who is the criminal, and he has been guilty of the most horrible crimes."

"Is the woman frantic?" asked the judge, in anger, but it by no means disconcerted the resolute Judith. "Truth is not frenzy," she replied, fearlessly, "you have been deceived by the most atrocious falsehoods. Listen to me, and I will reveal to you deeds of such enormity, as shall curdle your blood with horror——" The crowd pressed round her, while the judge bade her proceed.

"Listen then to what I have to say," cried the agitated maiden, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

She now entered into a detail of the horrors which she had long been accustomed to witness at her father's house. She described, with the most distinct minuteness, scenes of rapine and of blood, in which her own parent had acted but too prominent a part, assisted by associates of the most atrocious confederacy that ever disgraced humanity. She represented her home, the alehouse by the road side, to have been the death-place of many a weary traveller, and their grave the dark morass which skirted this miserable dwelling. Her ears had been long familiar with the groans of the dying, and her eyes with the sight of their expiring struggles. But she could not betray her parents to inevitable destruction, and therefore had been silent. The listeners shuddered at her frightful details, and especially when they heard that the hovel by the side of the morass had been the resort of those savage assassins, at whose atrocities the whole neighbourhood round had trembled for many years. The eyes of all were directed towards Ben

David, when Judith designated the principal murderer as "the Jew,"—a monster, whose thirst of blood exceeded all that had ever been related of the most ferocious cannibals. But upon her mentioning the name of Zodiah as the perpetrator of such unheard of crimes, and as the fabricator of the vile charges against Joachim and Ben David, which were as false as God is true, all present were abashed at beholding the tranquil countenances of the injured Hebrews. Upon her finally detailing the last horrid scene to which she had been witness, not only were the eyes of the by-standers filled with tears, but they were also once more visible in her own. Her utterance was choked by sobs, as the painful reflection occurred to her mind, that she could never sit upon the grave of her parents, that she could never remember them with kindly affection, but was bound to expose to the world their vices and their crimes. And when, after a long pause, and the murmuring which proceeded from the multitude had subsided, the judge asked her, in a serious tone, at the same time warning her of the consequences of uttering falsehoods, whether all she had spoken were true, and why she had not earlier restrained the excesses of those

villains by an open exposure of their crimes—she replied, calmly, “You forget that the persons, who were at the head of this horde of monsters, were my own parents. I should have been incapable of bringing to the wheel those to whom I owed my existence, even had thousands fallen by the knife of the Jew and his accomplices. The frightful event of yesterday has freed me from this constraint, and I swear, by all the holy angels, that what I have spoken is true. I have often had severe struggles between a sense of justice and of filial love—the culprits were my own father and mother; nature, therefore, placed a seal upon my lips, which the gracious God has yesterday thought proper to break, in his ineffable wisdom. Despise not, therefore, the words which I have uttered: let those live who are innocent, and let the guilty only suffer death.”

Here Judith ceased from exhaustion, and, upon beholding the looks of gratitude which the Jews directed towards her, bent her eyes upon the ground. The councillors sat dumb with astonishment, and the elder, Diether, was the first who broke the distressing silence. “God be praised,” he cried, “the cruel suspicions, which have so long convulsed my bosom, are

now gradually vanishing. Blessings attend you, courageous maiden, for having made your appearance at this auspicious moment."

The priest, Johannes, now turned towards those who guarded the prisoners, and said, "Speak a good word in favour of these poor criminals who are at this moment trembling before you, and cannot comprehend how their innocence has been so quickly established. If their fetters cannot be taken off for the present, you may at least lighten them, by a word of consolation and of hope."

"The woman must prove what she has advanced," replied the judge; "I have sent for Frederick, and woe be to him if what this maiden has asserted shall be found true."

"The murderer is possessed of the serpent's cunning," added Judith,—“he will beware of falling into a snare. Here, however, are my hands, bind them. Joyfully will I go to prison, for the Lord, who brought me hither, will, as a righteous judge and protector of orphans, neither forget me nor these innocent Jews. He will bruise the head of the unrighteous, and release the guiltless from their fetters."

The chief justice now ordered Judith to be conducted to the house for the reception of

female penitents, and the Jews to be taken back to their dungeon. Judith was accompanied by the shouting crowd, like a champion surrounded by his applauding countrymen, while Joachim and Ben David were followed by a mass of people, whose sense of shame for the wrongs they had heaped upon them kept them silent. The judges participated also in this feeling, and many now bewailed, in secret, the sufferings which these innocent Jews had undergone.

Ben David, however, said to Joachim, while tears of joy streamed from his eyes, "Now, father, what do you say?"

"Praise and thanks be to God," replied Joachim, bowing his head, as if in prayer, "the Powerful, the Almighty Lord, will preserve his people Israel; but what has become of our daughter Esther? It tears my heart to think of her, the joy of our old age, who has become a sacrifice to her love for us. It is this, Ben David, which distresses me."

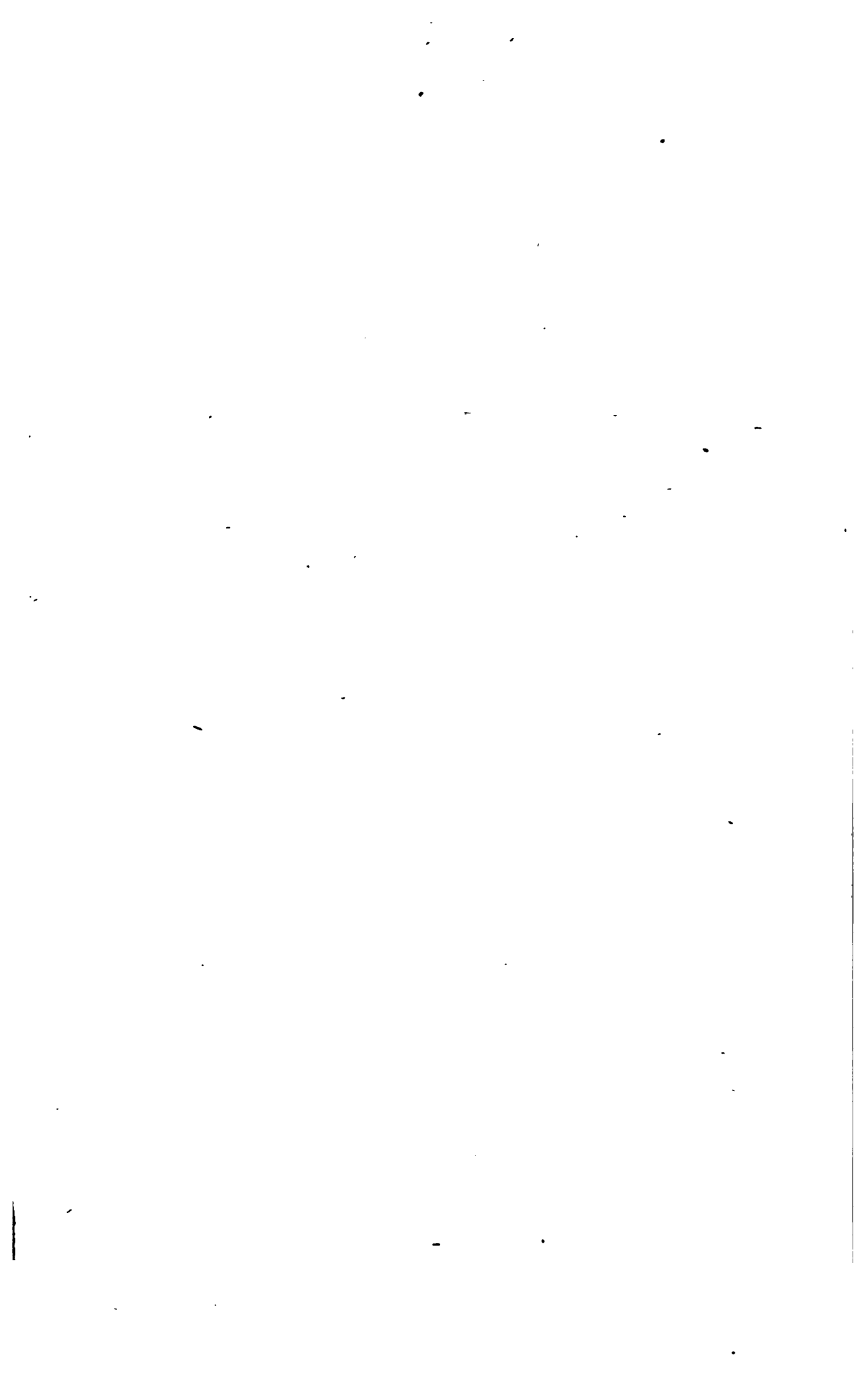
"Trust in God, father," replied Ben David, who could not, however, conceal his own intense anxiety. "Confide in Him who suffers not the guiltless to fall into evil. Esther will return to

us uninjured, and still become our consolation. With this hope, I go to my prison with more satisfaction than a monarch ascends his throne, and shall throw myself down upon my straw, with greater delight than I would upon the most sumptuous couch of the Passover; for the Lord is again with me. He is our strong stay, and through his mercy we shall again enjoy happiness in the land of the living."

When Joachim and Ben David reached the door of their prison, the old man blessed his son with that fervour which is usually bestowed upon a first-born child at his entrance into the world; when the iron doors were once more thrown open, and they both entered their dungeons more like conquerors, decorated with the garlands of victory, than like criminals led to solitary confinement.

END OF VOL. II.

24/2 1996 597



LOAN PERIOD 1 HOME USE	2	3
4	5	6

Books may be Renewed by calling 642-3405

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

SENT ON ILL

OCT 08 1993

U. C. BERKELEY

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
BERKELEY, CA 94720

FORM NO. DD6

YB 52771

M124988

865
S757
JUE
V.2

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

